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ABSTRACT

Although communities are making progress in establishing comprehensive systems for serving youth, they still face challenges. Enabling conditions that have allowed innovative youth councils to develop systems of youth development, education, and employment include: (1) youth opportunity grants; (2) established intermediary organizations; (3) strong school-to-career partnerships; (4) community-wide planning; (5) influential stakeholders; and an aggressive state youth policy organization. Policymakers and practitioners can improve youth services by eliminating onerous and cumbersome eligibility requirements, streamlining the accountability system, and improving upon outcome measures. (Information from ten youth council case studies, amounting to 75 per cent of the report, concludes with a recommendation for federal funding reauthorization in 2003.) (AJ)

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# Evaluation of the Transition to Comprehensive Youth Services Under the Workforce Investment Act

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# Table of Contents

**Acknowledgements** ..... ii
**The Project Partners** ..... iii
**Executive Summary** ..... iv
**Summary of Effective Strategies** ..... vii
**Introduction** ..... 1
**Section I: Governance and Membership Structures** ..... 3
Relationship to the Workforce Investment Board ..... 3
Governance ..... 4
Size and Composition of Membership ..... 4
Building Partnerships with Key Stakeholders ..... 5
Engaging Members ..... 6
**Section II: System Building** ..... 7
Legislative Provisions for System Building ..... 7
Promoting Collaborations ..... 8
Connecting to One-Stops ..... 8
Creating New Youth Centers ..... 9
Alternative Means of Providing Case Management ..... 9
Leveraging Other Resources ..... 10
**Ensuring Quality Services** ..... 11
**Enabling Conditions** ..... 12
**Policy Recommendations** ..... 14
Membership ..... 15
Eligibility ..... 15
Service framework ..... 15
Administration and Performance Measures ..... 16
Use of WIA funds ..... 16
**Appendix: Case Studies** ..... 18

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- Montgomery County Youth Council: Marty Liebowitz, Jobs for the Future;
- Marion County Youth Council: Verna L. Lalbeharie, Jobs for the Future;
- Long Beach Youth Council: Lili Allen, Jobs for the Future;
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- Pima County Youth Opportunity Movement: K.A. Dixon, Heldrich Center; and
- Tri-County Youth Council: Hilary Kopp, Consultant to Jobs for the Future.

## The Project Partners

**Jobs for the Future** seeks to accelerate the educational and economic advancement of youth and adults struggling in today's economy. JFF partners with leaders in education, business, government, and communities around the nation to: strengthen opportunities for youth to succeed in postsecondary learning and high-skill careers; increase opportunities for low-income individuals to move into family-supporting careers; and meet the growing economic demand for knowledgeable and skilled workers.

**The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development** was founded in 1997 at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey to address the needs of the nation's workforce development system. Its mission is to increase the efficiency of the labor market by identifying and creating strategies to empower America's workforce to seize the job opportunities emerging in the global economy.

## Related Reading

Kazis, Richard. 2001. *Youth Councils and Comprehensive Youth Planning: A Report from Eight Communities.* Boston: Jobs for the Future and San Francisco: New Ways to Work. This issue brief examines the potential of Youth Councils to become proponents of and planners for coordinated youth services and to advocate for improved outcomes for in-school and out-of-school youth.

Heldrich Center. 2000. *Recipes for Success: Youth Council Guide to Creating a Youth Development System Under WIA.* New Brunswick, NJ: Heldrich Center for Workforce Development. This guide is designed to provide practical information for community leaders, local Workforce Investment Boards, Youth Councils, staff, and others that are committed to effective youth and workforce development.

## Executive Summary

Jobs for the Future and the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development visited 10 Youth Councils across the country. The goal was to ascertain the progress communities are making and identify the challenges they face in establishing comprehensive systems for serving youth. The Department of Labor was interested in identifying how Youth Councils are implementing the comprehensive youth service provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and what factors contribute to and impede the success of such implementation. The communities in this study represent a cross-section of urban and rural localities that encompass large, medium, and small geographic areas. They have an array of experiences in building community-wide support for youth development, education, and employment.

In addition to the ten case studies, the report analyzes the challenges associated with components of WIA Youth Council implementation and delineates effective practices drawn from the 10 sites. The report assesses governance and membership structures, including membership size, composition, and engagement. It also explores system-building tasks related to Youth Council duties and responsibilities. *(The charts on pages vii and viii encapsulate the strategies profiled in this section of the report.)*

The report describes "enabling conditions" that have allowed innovative Youth Councils to develop a more comprehensive architecture for their local youth service system. These enabling conditions are:

- *A Youth Opportunity Grant* that can provide the fundamental structure for a centralized case management system for all youth in a community;
- *An established intermediary organization* that has built a solid reputation with critical stakeholders and has an infrastructure to facilitate youth, provider, and business engagement;
- *A strong school-to-career partnership* that created connections between K-12 institutions, businesses, and institutions of higher education;
- *A preexisting, community-wide planning process* that has mapped key players and initiatives in a community, identified key indicators around which stakeholders might coalesce, and then determined how WIA dollars can leverage other funds to address the issues;
- *Influential stakeholders* who have both the passion and the resources to leverage change in partnering institutions to support system-building for youth;
- *An aggressive state youth policy agency or organization* that can build capacity at the local level and align resources at the state level; and

- *Significant autonomy and authority* in relation to the Workforce Investment Board, through which Youth Councils can influence the amount and flexibility of resources devoted to youth issues in a community.

The report concludes with recommendations for WIA reauthorization in 2003, drawn from interviews with a sampling of policymakers and practitioners. The primary message from the field is that WIA's basic framework is right and that changes to the legislation should be tweaks rather than major shifts. All interviewees support keeping WIA as a separate legislative act rather than folding federal youth employment and development services into either TANF or federal education and economic development legislation.

Interviewees raised the following issues related to WIA reauthorization:

- *Youth Council Membership:* Many interviewees indicate that the requirements are too cumbersome and force them to "fill slots" without regard to local conditions. Others would argue for one small change: requiring K-12 partners, because of the centrality of secondary education to positive youth outcomes.

- *Eligibility:* Many interviewees feel that the process of determining eligibility can be onerous, and would like participation in the National School Lunch Program to serve as an indication of eligibility for WIA services. Interviewees were split on whether to relax the definition of "out-of-school youth" to allow youth in GED programs to be "counted" as out-of-school youth.

- *Service Framework:* Some interviewees argued that a portion of the youth population would benefit from stand-alone summer programs, even though the year-round service mandate was seen overall as a positive change.

- *Administrative Framework:* Some interviewees would like to see a change in administrative requirements to allow them to reserve funds for the costs of follow-up without being penalized for under-expending. Others are concerned about the complex performance accounting requirements and hope that the accountability system might be streamlined.

- *Use of WIA Funds:* Several interviewees argued that reauthorization should include funding for system-building activity, and include outcome measures or incentives that support the development of a comprehensive system for youth. There might be more explicit language requiring states to assist local Youth Councils with system-building. Others would like to see more flexibility in the Workforce Investment Boards' ability to shift WIA "adult dollars" to serve youth.

The findings of this study can help local areas build and grow more effective Youth Councils. The results will be used by the U.S. Department of Labor to identify technical assistance needs and to showcase promising practices.

## Summary of Effective Strategies

| Governance and Membership Structures | |
|---|---|
| **Scope of Authority** | **Tucson** and **Baltimore**'s Youth Councils have significant autonomy in relation to WIB and can set a policy agenda and control funds.<br>**Long Beach**'s Youth Council sits inside city government, has access to city funds, and can influence allocation of Community Development Block Grant, school-to-career, adult education, and county TANF dollars.<br>**Montgomery County** locates all county human services and employment funds under the Office of Jobs and Family Services. Both youth and adults are served through a comprehensive One-Stop that operates with a wide range of public funds and private dollars.<br>**Corning** and **Broward** Youth Councils have jurisdiction over TANF youth funds. |
| **Size and Composition** | **Portland** and **Indianapolis** have limited the number of service providers on the Youth Council to encourage a focus on policy issues over program implementation.<br>**Yakima** keeps the council small to foster equity in voice between the region's one small city and the many rural communities.<br>**Baltimore**'s large Youth Council—over 40 members—builds on an environment of multiple stakeholders and preexisting networks. |
| **Securing Key Leaders** | **Baltimore**'s mayor raised the visibility and status of the Youth Council, and potential members were invited to apply to serve. The council is chaired by a state deputy superintendent of education.<br>**Portland** engaged a leader at forward-thinking Portland Community College to help ensure that the Youth Council looks beyond short-term job placement to consider issues of advancement.<br>**Springfield** secured strong business involvement, resulting in significant leveraging of private-sector dollars for internships.<br>**Yakima** engages a K-12 superintendent, business representatives, and a postsecondary education leader.<br>**Corning's** chair is executive director of a leading career development organization and provides in-kind resources. |
| **Engaging Members** | **Portland** established a Youth Advisory Committee that meets prior to every council meeting to review the agenda and provide input on the issues to be addressed.<br>**Corning** requires providers to bring youth to Youth Council meetings, holds meetings at times that are convenient to young people, and enables youth to earn school credit for their involvement on the council.<br>**Tucson**'s youth-led Youth Development Council, with five adults and sixteen youth, advises the Youth Opportunity Movement and is engaging in policy issues with the Youth Council.<br>**Springfield** and **Baltimore** use a committee structure to maintain member involvement, assigning each a particular task related to implementing WIA practices and policies.<br>**Baltimore** requires that members who miss more than two meetings vacate their seat.<br>**Corning** credits its low turnover to the provision of training and technical assistance on members' roles and responsibilities. Members learn about the opportunity that WIA represents and how to think creatively about youth services. |

| System-Building Tasks | |
|---|---|
| **Promoting Collaborations** | **Corning**'s Youth Council used a bidder's conference to help providers, on-site, develop the collaborations required in its RFP.<br>**Broward County** forged an unusual partnership between its school board and the local housing authority, enabling school staff to recruit for out-of-school youth programs at the housing authority sites and document eligibility using housing authority records. |
| **Connecting to One-Stops** | **Tucson**'s youth service providers have each hired a Youth Service Specialist, who sits on a youth-focused case management team based at the One-Stop and attends weekly meetings to coordinate outreach, assessment, service delivery, and follow-up.<br>**Springfield**'s One-Stops have dedicated staff who guide incoming youth through the process of securing an internship and developing a work-based learning plan to outline learning goals.<br>**Corning** has undertaken a marketing campaign to encourage youth and young adults to utilize the One-Stop. A "Job Squad" name tag identifies One-Stop staff who have been trained to work with youth.<br>**Montgomery County** has set aside a "Youth Works Area" for case management and the provision of referrals to education, training, and human services for young people. It is staffed by experienced youth workers who can customize services to meet individual needs. Specified times are set aside for youth to use the Job Bank.<br>**Baltimore** has cross-trained its One-Stop staff to serve both youth and adults. In-school and out-of-school youth can receive core services. |
| **Creating New Youth Centers** | **Long Beach**, in the absence of Youth Opportunity Grant funding, integrates WIA, Community Development Block Grant, school-to-career, and adult education dollars to operate a Youth Opportunity Center that houses GED programs, after-school academic enrichment programs, WIA services, and a variety of other youth services.<br>**Tucson** has used Youth Opportunity Grant funds to develop a Youth Opportunity hub site that houses both workforce development services and a teen health center. |
| **Leveraging Other Resources** | **Corning** requires programs to partner with other organizations.<br>**Baltimore** and **Tucson** require programs to leverage other funding streams to deliver services.<br>**Springfield, Indianapolis,** and **Baltimore** built on a preexisting school-to-career system to leverage private and corporate dollars across the system.<br>**Long Beach** leverages resources at the system level to ensure that some portion of funds from a variety of city, county, and federal sources are garnered to deliver services.<br>**Montgomery County** has consolidated WIA, TANF, and county human service funds under a Department of Jobs and Family Services that oversees a system of comprehensive services for youth and adults. |
| **Ensuring Quality Services** | **Long Beach** will convene "best practice forums" in key areas related to the WIA 10 elements, and it will engage service providers in sharing their standards of performance in order to develop quality benchmarks for the 10 WIA elements around which all providers can coalesce.<br>**Broward County** holds monthly meetings with providers, giving them a forum for discussing coordination issues that include recruitment, intake, ongoing case management, and follow-up.<br>**Portland** has engaged youth in assessing services through its "Secret Shopper" initiative. Young people visited youth providers and evaluated their experiences using a standardized template.<br>**Baltimore** developed a Youth Practitioners Institute to train and certify youth providers in the Youth Opportunity system. After providers participate in a six-week training, the Youth Practitioners Institute employs them to work in the youth system. |

# Evaluation of the Transition to Comprehensive Youth Services Under the Workforce Investment Act

## Introduction

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 represents an enormous shift in federal policy in the arena of youth employment and youth transitions. Its youth provisions ask a field once characterized by discrete programs focused on short-term outcomes to move toward developing a comprehensive system that helps young people make effective transitions to higher education and living-wage careers.

To accomplish that goal, the Workforce Investment Act mandates the creation of new planning and coordinating entities called "Youth Councils," which serve as subgroups of local Workforce Investment Boards. Each new Youth Council is charged with:

- Developing a local plan for youth services;
- Recommending youth service providers to be funded with WIA funds;
- Overseeing the provision of WIA youth services and determining performance outcomes; and
- Coordinating local youth programs and initiatives.

A narrow interpretation of a Youth Council's role would confine its activities to oversight and monitoring services funded through WIA dollars. However, while the legislative mandate is not broad, the U.S. Department of Labor encourages Youth Councils to expand their scope of activities. To effectively coordinate local youth programs and initiatives, Youth Councils can align the multiple players and institutions within any community or countywide region, then creatively and efficiently leverage limited dollars to affect services provided to young people under a variety of funding streams.

This responsibility would be a major undertaking for an existing, well-financed coordinating body; it is inevitably a daunting task for newly formed entities. Youth Council members, who may have little history of working together, must develop a shared understanding of their new role, as well as a vision for a youth system that effectively provides services to all young people. They must work to identify and align funding streams tied to multiple state and federal agencies—and often directed at distinct age groups or geographical areas. Institutions that may not have collaborated effectively in the past—for example, K-12 schools and "second chance" alternative schools or employers and youth service providers—must develop linkages that improve services for youth.

Jobs for the Future and the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development undertook a case study analysis for the U.S. Department of Labor of 10 Youth Councils across the country to ascertain the progress communities are making and identify the challenges they face in establishing comprehensive systems for serving youth.[1] The Department of Labor was interested in ascertaining how Youth Councils are implementing the comprehensive youth service provisions of WIA, and what factors contribute to and impede the success of such implementation. The findings of this study can help local areas to build and grow more effective Youth Councils. The results will be used by the United States Department of Labor to identify technical assistance needs and showcase promising practices.

The communities in this study represent a cross-section of urban and rural localities that encompass large, medium, and small geographic areas. They have an array of experiences in building community-wide support for youth development, education, and employment. The common denominator is that a reputational survey of policymakers and practitioners has identified each of them as "exemplary."

**Youth Councils Profiled in this Report**

Baltimore, Maryland

Broward County, Florida

Chemung-Schuyler-Steuben, New York (Corning)

Hampden County, Massachusetts (Springfield)

Long Beach, California

Marion County, Indiana (Indianapolis)

Montgomery County, Ohio (Dayton)

Pima County, Arizona (Tucson)

Portland, Oregon

Yakima and adjoining counties, Washington

Some states are now four years into implementing WIA, while others are only two years into the process. In the context of an enormous shift in goals and priorities, this is hardly any time at all. Yet a clear pattern is emerging. Across the country, the experiences of Youth Councils can be characterized in terms of three stages of progress toward implementing the WIA mandate. Many Youth Councils have "maintained the status quo," in the words of one policymaker, funneling WIA

[1] Case studies of the 10 sites are in the appendix.

dollars into programs previously funded under JTPA. Others have gone further and undertaken resource mapping and gap analyses to identify local youth-serving organizations, potential resources to be leveraged, and services for youth that should be strengthened or expanded. Communities in the third stage, including all the Youth Councils profiled in this report, have taken significant additional steps to fulfill WIA's promise. These 10 communities are *not* typical of Youth Councils across the country: they have begun to build comprehensive, community-wide youth-serving systems that cross institutional and programmatic boundaries.

The report contains two primary sections: governance and membership structures, including membership size, composition, and engagement; and system-building tasks related to Youth Councils' duties and responsibilities. The report then describes the "enabling conditions" that have allowed faster-moving Youth Councils to develop a more comprehensive architecture for their local youth service system. It closes with recommendations from the field for WIA reauthorization in 2003, based upon interviews with representatives from case study sites and policymakers and researchers from across the country.

## Section I: Governance and Membership Structures

### Relationship to the Workforce Investment Board

The Workforce Investment Act states that Youth Councils serve as a subcommittee of the Workforce Investment Board and make recommendations to the WIB for use of WIA funds for youth services. According to some stakeholder groups, many—if not most—Youth Councils across the country have limited autonomy or authority. In contrast, the majority of the Youth Councils in this study have garnered a significant degree of freedom of action and access to additional funds. The Youth Councils in Tucson, Arizona; Corning, New York; Baltimore, Maryland; and other communities enjoy significant autonomy relative to the WIB, and they can set policy agendas and expend funds as necessary. In some cases, this can result in additional funding: the Corning Youth Council has jurisdiction over TANF youth funds; the Long Beach Workforce Development conserves youth funds by shifting 18-21 year-olds to adult WIA services.

How Youth Councils overlap membership with the WIB can also determine the degree of the Youth Council's authority. In Montgomery County, Ohio, the Youth Council is one of four subcommittees of the Workforce Policy Board (Montgomery County's WIB), and key community leaders sit on both the Youth Council and the board. In Indianapolis, half the Youth Council membership sits on the Workforce Investment Board, helping ensure that youth issues are not given short shrift in WIB planning efforts.

### Governance

A Youth Council's location and accountability vis à vis city or county government, a business or community intermediary, or a preexisting school-to-career entity can largely determine the amount, and flexibility, of resources it can influence. Significantly, WIA does not specify which entity should house the WIB and its Youth Council, and some communities have selected an institutional home that facilitates integration or coordination of WIA youth services with other funding streams.

The Long Beach Youth Council, for example, sits inside city government, which gives it access to city funds and a "foot in the door" in advocating for the city's use of TANF funds to reach youth. The Youth Council can influence the allocation of Community Development Block Grant, school-to-career, adult education, and county TANF dollars to provide services to youth.

Before WIA, Montgomery County located all human services and employment funds under an Office of Jobs and Family Services. Both youth and adults are served through a comprehensive One-Stop that operates with a wide range of public funds and private dollars.

The Portland Youth Council is housed in an intermediary organization that has the support of city government, the business community, and institutions of higher education. Prior to the implementation of WIA, the Private Industry Council had restructured into an entity similar to a workforce board, and the city had consolidated all workforce development funds in the new organization to create a coherent, citywide system.

### Size and Composition of Membership

Among the first steps local Workforce Boards should consider when establishing a Youth Council is to determine its size and how to build partnerships with particular stakeholders, such as youth providers, employers, youth, and the K-12 and postsecondary education systems. WIA mandates the inclusion of particular types of Youth Council members (e.g., representatives of housing authorities, juvenile justice, parents of WIA-eligible youth), but it does not specify all who might be expected to have an interest in youth outcomes.

Beyond the required members, Youth Councils may include representatives from institutions of higher education, employers, alternative education providers in the "second chance" system, K-12 educators, youth, and leaders in the field of youth development. Each of these stakeholders can play an important role in improving outcomes for youth and should be considered in developing a comprehensive service delivery system. For example, alternative education providers may have developed strategies for engaging youth from which K-12 systems can learn, and stronger connections between the K-12 and second chance systems can facilitate young people's progress toward gaining credentials. Postsecondary

institutions often partner with high schools to facilitate youth transitions through such initiatives as dual enrollment, and these might be expanded. However, even communities that have made significant progress in developing a youth service system struggle with aligning the various players and institutions within the region.

The Youth Councils profiled in this study come in a variety of sizes and represent a range of membership compositions, depending upon the local context and local decisions. Both Portland and Indianapolis have limited the number of service providers on the Youth Council as a way to encourage a focus on policy issues over program implementation. Portland intentionally secured youth and business representatives, viewing these stakeholders as its "dual clients" for an effective workforce development system. As an alternative means of gaining provider input, it created a Contractors Steering Committee, one member of which sits on the Youth Council as a voice for provider issues.

The leadership of Yakima's Youth Council, which serves three counties, decided to keep the council small as a way to foster equity in voice between the region's one small city and the many rural communities. Conversely, Baltimore's large Youth Council—over 40 members—appropriately builds on a long history of high-level interest in youth development and education and an environment of multiple stakeholders and preexisting networks.

**Building Partnerships with Key Stakeholders**

Engaging community leaders with political standing and expertise is key to success. One chair suggested that communities undertake "player-mapping" to identify influential key leaders with access to resources who might sit on the Youth Council. The communities that have moved farthest in developing policies and aligning resources to improve youth services tend to be those that have secured high-level government and business leader participation on their Youth Council.

In Baltimore, the mayor played a key role in raising the visibility and status of the Youth Council. Once he had secured the council's place in the political arena, potential members were invited to apply to serve on it. Baltimore's Youth Council is chaired by a state deputy superintendent of education, ensuring that the council's work is aligned with state education plans and that policy developed at the local level can potentially be spread across the state.

In Oregon, involving a leader at forward-thinking Portland Community College has ensured that the Youth Council looks beyond short-term job placement to consider issues of advancement. The council, again through its connections to the community college, has also leveraged significant resources for out-of-school youth and connected those youth with further education beyond a GED or diploma.

Springfield, Massachusetts, built upon its solid foundation of school-to-career planning to secure strong business involvement in the Youth Council. This has resulted in significant leveraging of private-sector dollars for internships.

In Yakima, Washington, the Youth Council moved beyond WIA-required membership to bring in representatives of business and both secondary and postsecondary education, including a K-12 superintendent. The Youth Council acts as an interface between schools and businesses and, according to WIB staff, seeks to "connect those who are educating tomorrow's workers with the employers who will hire them."

Corning's Youth Council chair also serves as executive director of the Career Development Council at the Schuyler County BOCES (Board of Cooperative Education Services), which provides in-kind support to the Youth Council, such as staff assistance, office space, and overhead.

**Engaging Members**

Keeping members engaged through the early stages of planning and coordinating services requires a careful organizing strategy. The initial tasks of Youth Councils—gaining a shared understanding of the new terrain under WIA and designing an RFP for the use of limited funds—can initially be all-consuming. Concentrating on important planning and coordinating roles may be addressed, in part, through strategies to engage particular stakeholders, such as youth and businesses; through the creation of a committee structure connected to concrete deliverables; or through the provision of training to Youth Council members on the broad scope of their role.

For example, a primary concern of many Youth Councils is maintaining the support of business leaders. In the words of one employer who sits on a Youth Council, "We aren't interested in the complicated lingo around federal guidelines—we're interested in getting results, quickly, like we do in our businesses." As noted, Portland made a conscious decision to limit the number of youth service providers on its Youth Council for this very reason.

Others have taken innovative approaches to gaining and keeping the involvement of youth. Portland established a Youth Advisory Committee that meets prior to every council meeting to review the agenda and provide input on the issues to be addressed. Corning requires providers to bring youth to Youth Council meetings, and it holds meetings at times that are convenient to young people who may be in school or working. Corning has also developed a partnership with the local school system, enabling youth to earn school credit for their involvement on the council. Youth Council staff help teachers develop assignments related to Youth Council policy work. Tucson's youth-led Youth Development Council, with five adults and sixteen youth, has begun by focusing on advising the Youth Opportunity Movement (Tucson's Youth Opportunity

Centers), but it is developing plans for engaging in policy issues with the Youth Council.

Committee structures are important to engaging members and providing them with meaningful assignments. Springfield organized its Youth Council into four work groups, assigning each a particular task related to implementing WIA practices and policies. Its work group on program development has already created a concrete product that will guide system-building efforts: a "blueprint" for youth services, with goals, objectives, action steps, and a timeline for each strategic question to be addressed. Reflecting both its large size and broad scope, Baltimore's Youth Council has created five committees: system building, WIA youth service providers, advocacy, summer jobs, and apprenticeship. The committee structure charges one subgroup—not the entire council—with leading the mandated task of selecting and overseeing providers, and it keeps ambitious planning and coordinating roles at the heart of the council's efforts. Baltimore also requires that members who miss more than two meetings vacate their seats.

The Corning Youth Council secured training and ongoing technical assistance from a state employment and training association on members' roles and responsibilities. Members learned about the opportunity that WIA represents and how to think creatively about youth services; Youth Council members credit this training with keeping the focus on policy issues and inhibiting turnover.

## Section II: System Building

WIA charges Youth Councils with helping communities move toward a systematic approach to planning for resource allocation and interagency collaboration that offer youth an array of coordinated services. This is no easy task, given a long history of federal and state funding streams that typically favor short-term interventions, discrete programmatic funding, and uncoordinated services provided by a host of organizations.

Two key questions facing Youth Councils are:

- How do Youth Councils make the most of their limited dollars to creatively identify and help align various youth funding streams so that young people are better served?
- What institutions and mechanisms can be created or leveraged to ensure that young people receive appropriately targeted and sequenced services to help them transition to adulthood?

### Legislative Provisions for System Building

The legislation contains references to two major strategies for building a coordinated system, both of which can be difficult to implement. First, WIA

explicitly charges Youth Councils with the task of coordinating youth services—yet their primary task is to select and fund programs that meet WIA requirements. The Youth Councils in this study have taken innovative steps in moving from discrete programs to more systematic approaches, primarily in the area of partnership-building and leveraging additional resources.

Second, WIA participants are encouraged to make use of the One-Stop service delivery system, which is primarily designed for adults. There are barriers to youth participation in One-Stops, such as the different developmental needs of young people and adults, as well as the particular staff skills required to reach out to youth and provide them with services. This is especially difficult in the case of out-of-school youth. As one interviewee put it, "Adults tend to require a lot less intensive services than youth." According to another, "There's a fundamental clash between youth culture and the professional polish of the One-Stop. Young people, especially those targeted by WIA, may not feel comfortable walking into a One-Stop to find employment and training services."

Nevertheless, WIA has prompted promising starts in several arenas, both in encouraging collaboration and in promoting a coordinated case management system.

**Promoting Collaborations**

Engaging providers in collaborative planning and service delivery can pose a major stumbling block: non-profit organizations compete for limited resources and may prefer to provide all services in-house as a way to control quality and conserve resources.

Some communities in the case study analysis have taken creative steps to engage providers in collaboration. For example, the Corning Youth Council did not just require collaboration in its RFP; at a bidder's conference, it told providers they would need to collaborate with one another to win a contract. On-site, at the bidders conference, Corning Youth Council staff used their working knowledge of the services each organization could provide and walked providers through the development of partnerships.

Broward County has forged an unusual partnership between its school board and the local housing authority. School staff visit each housing authority site to recruit out-of-school youth to WIA youth programs operated by the school district, and school counselors have access to housing authority records to document WIA eligibility.

**Connecting to One-Stops**

Many of the case study sites have successfully integrated youth services into their One-Stop Centers, recognizing that additional measures are required to serve both youth and adults in one system. As required by the legislation,

Baltimore, Yakima, Springfield, and Tucson have placed youth provider staff at the local One-Stops:

- Tucson's youth service providers have each hired a Youth Service Specialist. This person sits on a youth-focused case management team based at the One-Stop and attends weekly meetings to coordinate outreach, assessment, service delivery, and follow-up.
- Springfield built upon a strong school-to-career legacy by situating its employer database at One-Stops. Each One-Stop has a dedicated youth staff member who guides incoming youth through the process of securing an internship and developing a work-based learning plan to outline learning goals.
- Corning has undertaken a marketing campaign to encourage youth and young adults to utilize the One-Stop. In addition, a special "Job Squad" name tag identifies One-Stop staff who have been trained to work with youth.
- Similarly, Montgomery County has set aside a "Youth Works Area" for case management and the provision of referrals to education, training, and human services for young people. It is staffed by experienced youth workers who can customize services to meet individual needs. Specified times are set aside for youth to use the Job Bank.
- Baltimore has cross-trained its One-Stop staff to serve both youth and adults. In-school and out-of-school youth can receive core services.

**Creating New Youth Centers**

Both with and without the benefit of a Youth Opportunity Grant (YOG), a few sites have created Youth Centers that can function as centralized case management systems for referrals to a variety of services. These sites are seeking to create an environment that is more appealing and less daunting to youth than are One-Stops.

In addition to its system of One-Stops, Tucson has used YOG funds to develop a Youth Opportunity hub site that houses both workforce development services and a teen health center. Long Beach integrates WIA, Community Development Block Grant, school-to-career, and adult education dollars to operate a Youth Opportunity Center that houses GED programs, after-school academic enrichment programs, WIA services, and a variety of other youth services.

**Alternative Means of Providing Case Management**

In Massachusetts, Commonwealth Corporation is the designated Title I WIA administrator and also provides technical assistance to local Youth Councils.

CommCorp has developed a creative means to offer case management services to WIA-eligible youth. It partnered with the state Department of Social Services to provide incentive grants to three communities, including Springfield, to develop a system that helps youth who are transitioning out of foster care to access postsecondary employment and education.

Although this model is in the early stages of development, Springfield has identified WIA-eligible foster care youth and provided them with a variety of case management services. This helps ensure that foster youth have coordinated access to social services, employment opportunities, and other services available under WIA.

**Leveraging Other Resources**

WIA encourages the leveraging and aligning of WIA resources with other funding streams, but it doesn't provide enough dollars to have a large impact at the local level. "It's hard to get people to partner with us when we have so little to bring to the table," said one practitioner. "We can't walk in and call the shots in terms of building a comprehensive system."

As noted, both where the Youth Council sits vis à vis city or county government and the inclusion of key players in the community and in government can help promote more successful leveraging of non-WIA dollars. As a recent Public/Private Ventures report points out, WIA does not consolidate programs and funding streams, and "partnerships and consolidation are not the same."[2] Many communities have developed discrete partnerships that leverage a variety of resources and funding streams at the program or system level.

This approach can take a range of forms:

- Requiring programs to partner with other organizations (e.g., Corning);
- Requiring programs to leverage other funding streams to deliver services (e.g., Baltimore, Tucson);
- Building on a preexisting school-to-career system to leverage private and corporate dollars across the system (e.g., Springfield, Indianapolis, Baltimore); and
- Doing legwork at the system level to ensure that some portion of resources from a variety of city, county, and federal sources are garnered to deliver services (e.g., Long Beach's Youth Opportunity Center). Certainly, those communities with Youth Opportunity Grants have a leg up

[2] Maria L. Buck. 2002. *"Charting New Territory: Early Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act."* New York: Public/Private Ventures.

in this regard, giving them the dollars to significantly leverage other funding streams.

On the other hand, only Montgomery County among the sites profiled has consolidated funds under a single entity that oversees a system of comprehensive services. Its Department of Jobs and Family Services consolidates WIA, TANF, and county human service funds. This unusual situation resulted from a well-grounded, ten-year planning process that led community leaders to conclude that the consolidation of administration would make service delivery more cost-effective, efficient, and successful. However, WIA did not drive the system building in Montgomery County; instead, WIA resources became part of the mix of resources available for services in the comprehensive system developed to serve dropouts and welfare dependents. Since its inception, the Youth Council has become central to county-level planning and coordination to improve services to young people.

The degree to which communities can leverage TANF dollars largely depends on the local and state context. Such factors as state policy, eligibility requirements, the service region of TANF vs. that of WIA, and which agency controls funds can vary dramatically. For example:

- Washington administers TANF dollars for employment and education services through the Department of Social and Health Services and targets primarily adults. Local Workforce Development Councils do not have control over TANF funds, and, given the state's emphasis, most leveraging of TANF funds for WIA is adult-focused.

- Ohio integrates TANF dollars at the county level across the state, a policy that was piloted in Montgomery County and then legislated statewide.

- In Florida, TANF and WIA funds are organizationally integrated, allowing Broward County and others to use TANF funds to conduct a private-sector jobs campaign.

- In New York, TANF funds go directly from the state to the local WIB. Because the Corning Youth Council has a semiautonomous relationship to the WIB, all TANF youth funds go directly to the Youth Council.

## Ensuring Quality Services

Monitoring WIA-funded youth services is a mandated responsibility of Youth Councils and, in some communities, it becomes its primary activity. The need to provide oversight to funded programs can serve as an opportunity to build a network of youth service providers with a common understanding of the needs of youth and common standards of performance.

Several communities have developed innovative strategies to translate performance monitoring into a community-building measure:

- Long Beach surveyed its providers to determine which services they provide, and it will follow up by convening "best practice forums" in key areas related to the WIA ten elements. Next, the Youth Council will engage service providers in sharing their standards of performance, and then develop quality benchmarks for the ten WIA elements around which all providers can coalesce.

- Broward County holds monthly meetings with providers, giving them a forum for discussing coordination issues that include recruitment, intake, ongoing case management, and follow-up.

- Portland has engaged youth in assessing services through its "Secret Shopper" initiative. Young people on the Youth Advisory Board visited youth providers and evaluated their experiences using a standardized template. Their ratings included such factors as staff interaction, user friendliness, accessibility, and assistance in developing long-term goals and concrete plans.

- Baltimore developed a Youth Practitioners Institute, run collaboratively by the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, the Sar Levitan Center at Johns Hopkins University, and Baltimore City Community College, to train and certify youth providers in the Youth Opportunity System. After providers participate in a six-week training, the Youth Practitioners Institute employs them to work in the youth system. The institute also provides a career ladder for young people interested in pursuing work in the youth development field.

## Enabling Conditions

Looking across the communities profiled in this study, and at others—such as Philadelphia—that have gained attention in the past few years for their rapid, sophisticated implementation of WIA youth policies and programs, several conditions emerge as critical. Some of these—such as receipt of a Youth Opportunity Grant—are now beyond the control of communities, but others can serve as pointers for Youth Councils hoping to step up to a more visible, more powerful role in shaping local youth outcomes.

Conditions that appear to promote more ambitious planning and system-building efforts by local Youth Councils include the following:

- ***A Youth Opportunity Grant*** in many cases provided the fundamental structure for a centralized case management system for all youth in a community, with referrals to appropriate services as necessary. YOG

resources, per year, often dwarf WIA-formula youth dollars. Baltimore, Portland, and Tucson received Youth Opportunity Grants.

- ***An established intermediary organization*** can serve as the springboard for a vital Youth Council. In some communities, such as Portland, a free-standing intermediary organization already has built a solid reputation with critical stakeholders and has an infrastructure to facilitate youth, provider, and business engagement. In Broward County, the intermediary organization introduced WIA by convening its board to debate the transition to year-round services under the new legislation. Indianapolis' Private Industry Council was poised to implement WIA because it had previously transitioned from a service provider to an oversight entity, providing technical assistance, training, and funding to providers.

- ***A strong school-to-career partnership***, built or expanded during the years when School To Work Opportunities Act funding was available to states and localities, created connections between K-12 institutions, businesses, and institutions of higher education. However, many communities with this framework have been less fully engaged with the "second chance" system of alternative education providers, who figure centrally in WIA.

- ***A preexisting, community-wide planning process*** puts youth education and development at the center of a community's political and social agenda. A few communities, such as Montgomery County and Baltimore, have adroitly attached their Youth Council to an already-moving train, using WIA dollars and the WIA framework to further efforts for helping youth make successful transitions to adulthood. Communities with a less auspicious history can learn some lessons from those that do: They might start by mapping key players and initiatives in their community; collaboratively identifying key indicators around which stakeholders might coalesce (e.g., number and profile of dropouts, young adults who are unemployed), and then thinking creatively about how WIA dollars can leverage other funds to address the issues.

- ***Influential stakeholders at the table***. Baltimore, Montgomery County, Portland, and Yakima have worked hard to engage the right players *for their community* in the Youth Council. For example, Portland enlisted a key architect of Portland Community College's efforts to connect disenfranchised youth to career pathways to serve on the Youth Council, then translated this connection into strong links between WIA services and community college offerings. Yakima selected its members for their "dual hats," ensuring that every member fulfilled WIA membership mandates *and* brought to the table key connections and a passion for youth education and development. Other communities might "map" influential players who can champion youth issues, then invite them to participate on the Youth Council.

- ***An aggressive state youth policy agency or organization*** can build capacity at the local level and align resources at the state level. In Massachusetts, Commonwealth Corporation, a quasi-public agency, receives WIA's 15 percent set-aside funds to do capacity building across the state. California has ramped up its role in supporting local Youth Councils through the assistance of New Ways to Work, which convenes the state's Youth Councils for technical assistance and maintains a Web site of promising practices (www.nww.org). Interestingly, according to a survey of local WIB chairs and directors conducted by the Heldrich Center in fall 2001, fewer than 1 percent cited youth programming as a critical concern of state WIBs. Communities that lack a state infrastructure to enhance local efforts might band together with other communities to argue for an increased state role in building the capacity of youth programming as a means to address the "emerging workforce."

- ***The Youth Council has autonomy and authority***. Youth Councils that did not have significant autonomy from the WIB at the start-up may subsequently move into a position to advocate for increased responsibility based on strategic alliances and positive outcomes.

## Policy Recommendations

The research for this report included interviews with Youth Council staff, leaders of the case study sites, and a number of policymakers and researchers across the country, soliciting their views on WIA reauthorization in 2003. How can reauthorization help Youth Councils accomplish WIA's goals? What changes—modest or dramatic—might make Youth Councils and WIA youth provisions more effective? Because of the targeted nature of our inquiry, the policy recommendations below focus sharply on particular legislative issues of concern to those trying to meet WIA's youth-serving mandate in their communities.

According to the interviews, the primary message from the field is that the basic framework of WIA is right, and changes to the legislation should be tweaks rather than major shifts. "We lost a good two years of down-time in the system in the transition between JTPA and WIA and are only now just recovering," said one interviewee. "We can't afford another major change."

Interviewees strongly support the holistic youth development approach of WIA and recommend only small changes that might better enable local Youth Councils to build a system appropriate to their communities. All support keeping WIA as a separate legislative act rather than folding federal youth employment and development services into either TANF or federal education and economic development legislation.

In the interviews and site visits, we encountered emerging issues in the areas of membership, eligibility, service framework, administration and performance measures, and the use of WIA funds.

**Membership**

Interviewees were split on the issue of Youth Council membership requirements. Many indicate that the requirements are too cumbersome and force them to "fill slots" without regard to local conditions, resulting in members who are less than fully engaged in the task of building a comprehensive system. For example, in some communities, public housing representatives—required members, according to the legislation—are critical to successful outreach to out-of-school youth; in others, they play a marginal role.

Others would argue for one small change: requiring K-12 partners. Clearly, secondary education is central to positive youth outcomes, and historically the youth development, youth workforce development, and K-12 education arenas have been split into separate silos. If Youth Councils are to develop a system that brings these fields together to help young people make effective transitions to adulthood, the interviewees argue, secondary educators should be at the table. Yet no interviewee argued for a mandated role for postsecondary institutions.

**Eligibility**

Practitioners identified issues related to participant eligibility. Many interviewees feel that the process of determining eligibility can be onerous, and they would also like participation in the National School Lunch Program to serve as an indication of low-income status and eligibility for WIA services.

While many mentioned the increased difficulty of reaching and serving out-of-school youth under the WIA mandate, only a few argued for relaxing the definition to allow youth in GED programs to be "counted" as out-of-school youth. Others reasoned that the new, stricter definition "holds Youth Councils' feet to the fire" in reaching the hardest-to-serve, who might not otherwise receive services.

**Service Framework**

Some argued that a portion of the youth population would benefit from stand-alone summer programs, even though the year-round service mandate was seen overall as a positive change. These interviewees argued that the spirit of WIA supports the provision of services as appropriate to the developmental needs of specific youth, and that some young people only need short-term interventions to help them find employment and engage in education.

### Administration and Performance Measures

The U.S. Department of Labor has expressed concerns about under-expenditures, which most interviewees attributed to start-up challenges. Several argued, however, that some of the funds counted as "under-expended" have been obligated and must be reserved for follow-up activities. These interviewees would like to see a change in administrative requirements to allow them to reserve funds for the costs of follow-up without being penalized for under-expending.

Several interviewees are concerned about the complex performance measures. They hope that the accountability system might be streamlined.

Regarding services to out-of-school youth, one respondent argued that youth who face multiple barriers require more extensive services to reach targeted outcomes. In these instances, providers would benefit from intermediate performance measures that allow them to benchmark youths' progress toward self-sufficiency. Others feel that the wage-increase requirement for out-of-school youth is too ambitious in the current economic climate.

### Use of WIA Funds

Given the centrality of system building to the WIA paradigm, several argued that reauthorization should include funding for that activity, and it should even include outcome measures that support the development of a comprehensive system for youth. One interviewee suggested that the Department of Labor provide incentives for collaboration and for the integration of multiple funding streams — such as those provided by the Department of Labor, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health and Human Services. DOL might free a portion of WIA funds from eligibility standards to enable sites to better integrate funding streams.

A few interviewees commented on the state role in capacity building. They indicated that states might benefit from more explicit language requiring them to use the 15 percent set-aside for Youth Council capacity building.

In some communities, the WIB has acknowledged the importance of serving youth as the emerging workforce. Interviewees would like to see more flexibility in the WIB's ability to shift WIA "adult dollars" to serve youth.

Despite these concerns, according to our interviews, most practitioners and policymakers agree that the field is in the early stages of development and that reauthorization should "first, do no harm" by allowing nascent efforts to grow. As we have found in this case study analysis, a lot more is happening on the ground on key issues of system development than one might think.

"We tend to hear from the same communities over and over again at national conferences, but there are baby steps being taken all over that others can learn from," said one interviewee. She echoed the thinking of many others who urge the U.S. Department of Labor to do more in convening regional meetings of Youth Councils focused on specific issues—such as those outlined in this paper—and geared toward exploring opportunities for Youth Councils to play an expanded role in shaping youth policy at the local and state levels.

## APPENDIX

## CASE STUDIES

**Baltimore, Maryland**
**Baltimore Workforce Investment Board Youth Council**

**Broward County, Florida**
**Broward County Youth Council**

**Corning, New York**
**Chemung-Schuyler-Steuben Youth Council**

**Dayton, Ohio**
**Montgomery County Youth Council**

**Indianapolis, Indiana**
**Marion County Youth Council**

**Long Beach, California**
**Long Beach Youth Council**

**Portland, Oregon**
**Portland Youth Council**

**Springfield, Massachusetts**
**Hampden County Youth Council**
**Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc.**

**Tucson, Arizona**
**Pima County Youth Opportunity Movement**

**Tri-County Youth Council**
**Yakima, Washington**

# Baltimore Workforce Investment Board Youth Council
# Baltimore, Maryland

## Best Practices and Key Strategies

- Local political leadership is provided by the mayor and substantiated through funding directives and visible support in media campaigns. The mayor addressed the Youth Council's first meeting and tasked members to implement the "blueprint" for the city. The presence of key political figures on the Youth Council helps ensure that it is both visible and influential in citywide education issues and youth programming.

- The agenda established, the director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development works diligently with the council. Council members maintain strong collaborative connections and will lead when asked. The council's leadership mantra, "there's always room at the table," allows various partnerships to evolve. Council members indicate that "no support equals no action."

- Participation with Youth Councils is voluntary. Still, council members come to the table prepared to share expertise and resources, and the council is proactive in responding to issues and challenges affecting Baltimore youth. Services are designed to include the greatest number of partners that will result in an effective service strategy.

- The city is a longtime proponent of a youth development system. WIA afforded the opportunity to realize a plan of action. Core goals were defined first, and from them other objectives can be achieved. But while core goals are fixed, the actions associated with achievement are not. The council looks for ways to provide opportunities and will change direction to meet a need.

## Youth Council History

Located 37 miles from Washington, D.C., Baltimore ranks 16th in population among U.S. cities. With five State Enterprise Zones that offer economic incentives, Baltimore is also a federal urban Empowerment Zone with access to federal resources, federal tax credits, and all State Enterprise Zone tax credits for eligible businesses. Baltimore is also one of seven jurisdictions participating in the One Maryland Program, which provides significant tax credits for capital investments that generate jobs. According to the Maryland State Data Center, the population is 651,154, of whom 232,494 are under 24 years old. The estimated median household income is $31,700.

The Baltimore City Youth Council is a subcommittee of the Baltimore Workforce Investment Board. Convened in February 2000, the Youth Council initially

evolved from a series of unrelated, collaborative relationships that existed prior to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Maximizing its Career Connections partnerships, Baltimore's Youth Council championed a team approach to youth development. Career Connections, Maryland's comprehensive school-to-career system, supports school reform, workforce preparation, and economic development.

Application for a Youth Opportunity (YO!) grant provided a vehicle to develop a model framework for effectively addressing the many issues that challenge youth. Since the school-to-work and evolving YO! grant partnerships were in place during the formation of the Youth Council, the collaborations formed under these partnerships were expanded to encompass the Youth Council. The Workforce Investment Act provided an easy translation of the previous discussions about youth development. With WIA, the economic structure changed, as did the resources to support youth development efforts.

## Site Profile

### Leadership

Historically, Baltimore has enjoyed broad-based support, including substantial support from the mayor and major community-based organizations. The Youth Council is comprised of a diverse cross section of community leaders and representatives of youth service providers, public and private businesses, education, non-profit organizations, organized labor, youth, and parents. With 45 members, the Youth Council has five subcommittees: system building, WIA youth service providers, advocacy, summer jobs, and apprenticeship.

Membership requires active participation. Those missing more than two meetings without sending a representative are asked to vacate their seat. The success of the council is directly related to the energy and local political leadership of all involved—from the chair, to the administrator, board members, and the director of Mayor's Office of Employment Development. The appointment of the Assistant Deputy State Superintendent of the Maryland Department of Education as Youth Council chair establishes the commitment of education as a significant stakeholder, further solidifying the collaboration between education's school-to-career initiative and the employment and training system.

High-profile support from the mayor has provided the Youth Council with political validation of youth issues, demonstrated through support for building a comprehensive youth system that will promote the opportunities for youth (14-21 years of age) to acquire the necessary life skills, education, work exposure, and experiences to enable them to have productive careers and become responsible family members and citizens.

This support is evidenced through the mayor's backing of the annual Youth Works campaign (summer youth employment program): this backing included an appeal and active recruitment of local businesses to play a role in role in creating authentic work-based learning experiences for youth. The Baltimore Development Corporation and the Baltimore Workforce Investment Board have committed their support to providing opportunities and guidance for the youth system, with many employers, including Johns Hopkins Hospital, Verizon, and UPS.

Additional political leadership and support is demonstrated through Baltimore City's One-Stop partners (Career Center Network), which include the Maryland Department of Labor, the Baltimore Urban League, AFL-CIO unions, the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, and Baltimore City Community College. The Career Center Network's capacity to serve customers citywide is augmented by linkages with various other community-based organizations and government agencies.

Youth Council members "check their egos at the door": all recognize that they must share resources and information in order to provide better service. Collective, creative brainstorming results in solutions that "blur turf" issues, with efforts to always embrace the bigger picture or "30,000 ft. view." The council focuses on serving the entire youth and young adult population in Baltimore, and it has developed a vision and mission statement supportive of the mission and goals of most youth-serving organizations.

**Resource Allocation**

The Youth Council has oversight of the Youth Opportunity Grant, Rewarding Youth Achievement Grant (which provides year-round mentoring and career exploration for youth at four public schools with the highest dropout rates), and funds that are generated to support the summer job programs. The council also works with its partners to coordinate services provided by other member youth-serving organizations. As a part of the RFP process, the council requires all of its service providers to leverage funds within their respective operational networks.

With the implementation of the $44 million federal Youth Opportunity Grant, the council established the Youth Practitioners Institute to provide training and certification for youth professionals that work in the YO! System.

The Youth Practitioners Institute is a collaborative effort between the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, the Sar Levitan Center at Johns Hopkins, and Baltimore City Community College. Baltimore youth practitioners were the first in the United States to obtain certification as "youth practitioners." The Institute prepares YO! employees for the rigors of youth development work through a six-week training course, and it also serves as the employer of record for all employees hired by the Youth Opportunity system. More than 70 professionals have been trained and certified. The institute also provides young

people with the opportunity to explore youth work as a potential career and to build and acquire credentials and skills leading to jobs in the system.

As one of its initial activities, the Youth Council completed a resource-mapping project. The Youth Council contracted with the Center for Fathers, Families and Workforce Development to develop a resource map focused on service providers, youth support services, and funding streams in the metropolitan area. The mapping organized services around the 10 WIA youth program elements. A gap analysis was developed, with information available in print and electronic formats. The result of this project has helped guide subsequent RFP priorities, including an additional Youth Center and the next RFP assigning priority to in-school youth.

A major Youth Council goal is to collaborate with the education system to provide alternative, transitional methods to traditional instructional practices and develop a credit recovery system. The dropout rate for Baltimore youth hovers around 50 percent. The council believes that if students can "bank" their education credits, reentry into the education system would be easier and more appealing. Combining an education program with an apprenticeship or training program would afford dropouts and potential dropouts an alternative to the traditional educational experience.

The council also advocates a dropout recovery plan in which the respective funds for each student follow them through the system, thereby supporting the alternative education experience. The alternative education path will include the implementation of Diploma Plus. This program was developed and is managed by the Center for Youth Development and Education division of the Commonwealth Corporation, a Massachusetts-based, quasi-public corporation dedicated to workforce development and education reform.

Diploma Plus was launched In 1996 at two Boston-based community organizations, then piloted in Boston. In Baltimore, it will allow students to acquire a high school diploma, rather than a GED, through a combination of contextual learning, portfolio assessment, college courses, and internships. The program is performance-based: participants show what they have learned, rather than how much time they spent in class. The program will be available to Baltimore youth needing a maximum of eight of the twenty-one credits required to obtain a high school diploma.

The State Youth Council is also examining what happens to youth after leaving school. This data collection will yield a snapshot of what types of programs work best with the out-of-school youth population, while helping provide a safety net to ensure that youth receive the services they need.

**Services**

The Youth Council developed and implemented a process for selecting youth service providers that resulted in the identification of nine organizations to deliver WIA services to youth (in and out of school). These organizations were awarded over $3 million in WIA funds to deliver a broad range of career development activities. An additional service provider has since been included.

Under the guidance of the Baltimore Workforce Investment Board, six One-Stop Career Centers provide job seekers with access to a wide range of employment and training services and job preparation tools. (Two of these centers target the needs of welfare clients.)

A Youth Employment Specialist works in each of the four One-Stop Centers, as well as in the Workforce Reception Center that serves the TANF population. Older youth may take advantage of the adult training dollars through Independent Training Accounts, customized training, and occupational skills classes. Out-of-school youth are also served by nine of the ten youth service providers. The Youth Council has identified low literacy levels as the most significant challenge in providing services to this population.

The most common services provided to youth are alternative education, skills training, counseling, and work experience. The most difficult services to deliver are formal mentoring and follow-up. However, a strategy for providing formal follow-up services is in place.

All of the service providers make internal referrals as dictated by the level of service required in each participant's individual service strategy. Staff are all cross-trained and can make referrals between adult and youth services. Both in-school and out-of-school youth can use all core services available in the One-Stops.

While the Youth Council's direct budget is provided through WIA funds, other resources are leveraged to support non-WIA eligible youth. Funding streams include the YO! grant, Rewarding Youth Achievement, School-to-Work, SAFE,[3] and private funds through the Baltimore City Foundation. Funds are used as appropriate to serve youth.

The Youth Council has also developed a creative and substantive process to integrate summer and year-round programs and link summer employment to academic and occupational learning. The Youth Council chair of the summer jobs committee (YouthWorks) focuses on securing internships and year-round employment for youth with local businesses. In 2001, 5,000 youth were placed in

[3] SAFE is a U.S Department of Education initiative to help school and community leaders, parents, and students develop a strategy to ensure safe schools in their communities.

summer jobs. A career fair was held at Ravens (PSINet) Stadium, requiring participants to come dressed—physically and mentally—to seek employment. The Career Fair at PSINet Stadium included over 50 employers and was attended by 350 students, of whom 72 were hired on the spot. An additional 123 youth received pending offers. Summer employment funds came from the Department of Human Resources, Baltimore City, the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, and the state. Private-sector employers donated over $182,000.

The foundation of the YouthWorks campaign is making summer jobs a "city responsibility." During summer 2001, YouthWorks provided 5,000 Baltimore youth with work-based learning opportunities, including jobs and educational enrichment activities. It is preparing to increase the number of youth served in 2002.

The Youth Council is challenged by insufficient funding to provide the level of service necessary to address the youth population in Baltimore. At present, the council considers the only option is to mount a public relations and marketing campaign to generate community awareness of its work and solicit the private sector for funding support, while doing a better job of coordinating services and eliminating duplication of services.

## WIA Reauthorization

Recommendations for WIA reauthorization should include rethinking how expenditures are calculated. Also, obligations should be included in the calculation of funding availability. WIA should not be incorporated into JOB Corps or TANF funding streams. The purpose and needs of the youth currently served by these funds are different.

## Contact

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## List of Interviewees

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Chairman, Baltimore Workforce Investment Board Youth Council
Deputy State Superintendent, Maryland Department of Education

Karen L. Sitnik
Director, Mayor's Office of Employment Development

Alice Cole
Administrator, Mayor's Office of Employment Development

Rada Moss
United Way of Central Maryland

James Hamlin
United Parcel Service, Atlantic District

Beverly Arah
BCCC, Business & Continuing Education Center

Jennie Smith Campbell
Program Director, Turning the Corner

# Broward County Youth Council
# Broward County, Florida

## Best Practices and Key Strategies

The story of youth services under WIA in Broward County, Florida, is simultaneously a story of an active Youth Council and a case of WIA bureaucratic regulations leading to programmatic changes. In particular:

- As a result of WIA administrative mandates for serving out-of-school youth, Workforce One, which coordinates the Youth Council, serves a group of youths who otherwise would not have been served. Prior to WIA, most out-of-school youths served in Broward were recruited through local GED programs. Since WIA, Broward has re-targeted services to youth who are completely disenfranchised from the youth system.

- Recruitment and retention are critical factors for successfully serving out-of-school youth. Because of stipulations in WIA, Workforce One can no longer recruit participants from local GED programs and has partnered with the local Housing Authority to recruit participants. School counselors gave presentations at local housing sites about out-of-school youth programs. Further, counselors were able to use Housing Authority records to help document WIA eligibility.

- The strategic planning process helped position Workforce One among the youth providers in Broward. A countywide strategic planning process provided Workforce One with a big-picture view of where it fits into the matrix of youth social services in South Florida. Consequently, Workforce One's own strategic planning process places it as the key leader in youth services, with collaborations with the school board and other service agencies.

- Workforce One encourages capacity building by holding monthly provider meetings at which providers brainstorm about programmatic issues, such as eligibility procedures and recruitment strategies. Monthly coordination meetings bring program providers together with the assessment/case management provider and discuss coordination issues that include recruitment, intake, ongoing case management, and follow-up, especially as related to program outcomes.

## Youth Council History

Broward County is mostly urban and suburban. Its major city is Fort Lauderdale.

As of 2000, the county population stood at 1.6 million, with 16.7 percent of the population Hispanic and 22.2 percent African-American. The unemployment rate was 3.7 percent, very near the state rate of 3.6 percent.

Broward's economy is based on retail and services than manufacturing more than is typical nationally or statewide. By 2005, it is projected that 41 percent of all jobs in Broward will be in the service sector. Youth unemployment tends to be higher than the overall employment rate. In 1999, 13 percent of Florida youth were unemployed, compared to 3.9 percent for the population as a whole.

As one of its missions, Broward County's Youth Council assists youth in finding jobs and provides youth with opportunities to improve their skills. At the county's first Youth Council meeting, convened in July 1999, the newly formed body had about 20 members. They came from a variety of organizations ranging from local businesses, to the housing authority, to the school board.

According to the executive director, the 1994 JTPA rescission of funds had taken Workforce One out of the youth business, and only recently did it began to regain a youth focus. As he describes it, WIA was a kindling force for the debate between year-round youth programming and youth summer programming. The board engaged in formal debates on the subject and ultimately decided to focus on year-round youth programs.

About a year ago, a new Youth Council chair took office, and numerous people noted that he has reinvigorated the body. The Youth Council plays an active role in the youth services offered throughout the county. In addition to its leadership and oversight role, the council is familiar with the various programs' operations. The council members often visit local providers, providers often present status reports at monthly meetings, and the council is an integral part of the RFP review process. Further, the Youth Council and program services in Broward are well-connected to the local school system because the Broward School Board is represented on the council and is a primary service provider. Local businesses, the Housing Authority, and the sheriff's office are also among the active members of the council.

Despite the active role of the Youth Council, last year Workforce One lost a large amount of TANF funding. The number of youth programs fell from nine programs operated by several providers, to four programs operated mainly by the School Board and the Urban League. In spite of the loss in funding, Workforce One has demonstrated success in providing comprehensive services, facing the challenges of serving out-of-school youth, and establishing a proactive Youth Council.

## Site Profile

### A Shift to Comprehensive Services and the Role of Strategic Planning

The philosophical transition to WIA principles and objectives was generally smooth in Broward County because Workforce One recognized the need to move to more comprehensive services. To ensure an informed transition, the executive director held a formal debate on the pros and cons of shifting from summer youth services to year-round youth services. After lengthy discussions, the council members agreed that a shift to year-round services was the appropriate direction in Broward County.

The operational transition was handled successfully as a result of the innovative efforts of Workforce One. Because the number of summer programs fell significantly during the shift from JTPA to WIA, Workforce One ran job fairs to connect about 400 youth with summer employment. In 2000 and 2001, it used TANF funds to operate a private-sector job placement program. Workshops were held at various high schools, and bus passes were distributed so students could attend a centralized job fair, where employers set up booths to take applications and conduct interviews.

Although fewer youth are served under WIA than under JTPA, those served are getting more intensive services. All of the programs are year-round, serving youth through the summer and the academic year. For example, the Brandeis Summer Transition program, a math and science enrichment program, has a six-week summer program and school-year activities that include a Saturday Science Academy.

As part of its comprehensive services approach, Workforce One convenes a meeting with its providers each month. The meeting gives providers a chance to meet with the case management provider and review the recruitment, intake, case-management, and follow-up process. Workforce One also holds regular meetings for the Brandeis Summer Transition program, where it works on creating and updating a Logic Model and completing the PEPNet self-assessment process.

In addition, the strategic planning process has provided Workforce One with a big-picture view of where it fits into the matrix of youth social services in South Florida. Workforce One was simultaneously involved in its own strategic planning process as well as a system-wide planning process headed by the county's Children's Services Division. Workforce One's local plan has a system-wide approach and situated the organization as the key leader in youth services, collaborating with the school board and other service agencies.

### Serving Out-of-School Youth

While the switch to comprehensive services was relatively smooth, the transition for out-of-school youth services was more difficult. The switch from JTPA to WIA made serving out-of-school youth more of a challenge for Workforce One. As explained by the executive director and the program manager, the challenge resulted from the legislative change in the definition of out-of-school youth. Prior to WIA, Workforce One would recruit participants for out-of-school youth programs from local GED centers. However, WIA requires that out-of-school youth not to be enrolled in any sort of school program, so the organization had to find a different means of recruitment. Initially, the out-of-school program was slow to find participants, but soon the Housing Authority identified eligible youths, and word has spread about the opportunity. School board staff visited each housing authority site and gave presentations about the out-of-school programs available. Also, school counselors could access housing authority records to help document WIA eligibility. Despite the initial recruitment challenges, Workforce One now invests over 30 percent of its funds on out-of-school youth programs.

The school board runs the main out-of-school youth program, Academy of Careers and Technology, which trains about 45 out-of-school youth for occupations and assists with job placement. Another out-of-school youth program is a youth apprenticeship program run by Liberian Economic and Social Development Incorporated. The program trains youth in carpentry trades and battles high drop-out rates among youths facing family problems. An additional out-of-school youth program is called Edutainment. It uses hip-hop music to teach about 20 youth about business fields.

### The Youth Council: An Effective Leadership Body

The Youth Council was an active participant in the shift to comprehensive services and to serving a new population of out-of-school youth. Moreover, the presence of the Youth Council in Broward County has enhanced collaboration, resource networking, and the leverage of additional resources. Further, the council provides a forum for system-wide discussions with regard to youth services. A representative of the school board believes the council's visits to providers and provider presentations at council meetings have better connected the council leadership with all levels of program/service operations.

The Youth Council has also enhanced the consensus-building process, as noted by a staff member of Workforce One. More people are at the table voicing their opinions. In particular, the council includes a parent, an out-of-school youth, and local business people.

A Citibank employee and council member noted that body was mutually beneficial to her company and the community. By participating in the council meetings, she gets a big-picture view of youth services in Broward and sees opportunities for Citibank to donate its services, such as workshops on resume

writing and financial planning. In addition, members representing local businesses recently committed to each offer at least one internship for youths enrolled in Workforce One programs.

The council also provides opportunities for collaborations and leveraging resources. A member from the county sheriff's office values the partnerships developed through the council because each member has an area of expertise that can be leveraged in the request for proposal process.

The council also monitors the performance of its providers. Broward County has long had performance-based contracting, and follow-up reporting has become more intensive under WIA. Providers engage in more comprehensive follow-up that includes, phone calls, home visits, and counselor follow-ups. Moreover, the council takes a supportive attitude while monitoring the success of its providers: one member said, "If a provider fails, the board has failed."

The council has made innovative attempts to create an environment for its service providers to prosper. To provide a longer-term approach to program services, the council shifted from one-year contracts with providers to one-year contracts with an option to renew for three subsequent years. Further, it simplified its RFP process by requiring a 12-page proposal and then providing assistance to the selected providers in the more detailed application process.

## WIA Reauthorization

Given the opportunity, Workforce One would lobby for more flexible eligibility requirements, as in the case for adult workers needing less documentation. Further, the organization would appreciate more flexibility to move resources between adult services and youth. The program manager also expressed an interest in having the flexibility to fund some short-term initiatives.

Providers and members of the Youth Council consistently expressed frustration with the eligibility procedures. There is a widespread belief in Broward that the eligibility and assessment process creates unnecessary paperwork; even more important, some clients who would have been served under JTPA may be refused services under WIA. For example, under JTPA a letter verifying eligibility for a school free lunch program would have qualified a youth for services. However, WIA now requires proof of minimum income, creating an additional layer of administrative detail and increasing the time organizations spend reviewing cases and eligibility. Although there is an option for participants to self-proclaim need, the law requires 10 percent of those cases to be verified, and the organization is reluctant to put itself at risk of violation.

The Workforce One program manager would also like to revert to the JTPA definition of out-of-school youth. This would allow GED and alternative education students to enroll in out-of-school youth programs, which she believes are more appropriate for them than programs designed for high school students.

Much to the liking of the leadership at Workforce One, the Florida State Legislature leaves WIA implementation in the hands of local leaders. Several staff expressed their support for the minimalist role of the state and an emphasis on local rule, which allows for flexibility and creativity in meeting unique local needs. However, program staff expressed some frustration with the state's inability to answer questions about WIA policies.

Although minimalist in its approach, the state legislature reserved about $5 million in WIA funding to be awarded, at the discretion of the state, to competing local areas that submit grant requests. Workforce One won funding from the state grant program to fund the youth apprenticeship program. The state maintains an oversight role and can take action if a local area does not meet performance standards.

## Contact

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## List of Interviewees

Mason Jackson
Executive Director, Workforce One

Deborah Forshaw
Program Manager, Workforce One

Rochell J. Daniels
Workforce One legal counsel

Davette Conner
School Board, Coordinator, Vocational, Adult, and Community Education

Ron Schultz
School Board, Academy of Careers and Technology

Michael Shorter
School Board

Linda McNair
School Board

Jeanette Kiene
Urban Leauge

Sharon Patrick
Urban League

# Chemung-Schuyler-Steuben Youth Council
# Corning, New York

## Best Practices and Key Strategies

- Youth involvement on the Youth Council is critical to keeping the focus on the services for young people. To recruit young adults, the Council *requires* that program operators bring a young adult to the Youth Council meetings. Meetings are also held at times when it is most convenient for the young people on the Council to attend.

- The Chemung-Schuyler-Steuben Youth Council used the RFP process to force collaboration between community partners. The Youth Council made very clear to all bidders that only broad partnerships would be funded. Currently, there are only four program operators for the entire three-county region.

- The CSS Youth Council Chair also serves as the as Executive Director of the Career Development Council at the Schuyler County BOCES. The infrastructure and in-kind assistance that the organization contributes as a result of the strategic chair appointment is key to the Youth Council's stability and capacity.

- Building on existing collaborations was an important contributing factor to the effectiveness of the CSS Youth Council. Three-quarters of the successful School-to-Work partnership evolved into the Youth Council after the sunset of the School To Work Opportunities Act.

- Training and technical assistance is critical so that members know their role in the workforce development system, what is expected of them according to the law, and where their individual expertise can be applied to look beyond the requirements of WIA alone and to set policies that make tangible differences in the lives of young adults.

- The CSS Youth Council is working hard to make strong connections to the local One-Stop system. Council staff went to the five local One-Stops to educate the youth services staff of programs in the community. All youth services staff at the One-Stop are members of the "Job Squad." Name badges with the Job Squad logo identify staff who have been trained by the Youth Council and also help young adults to identify from whom they can get information.

## Youth Council History

The Chemung-Schuyler-Steuben Youth Council serves approximately 450 young adults in the three counties. The region's landscape is largely rural and the

economy is mostly agricultural, although the area is home to corporate giant Corning, Inc., as well as to other companies, such as Elcor Health Services, Inc., and Dresser Rand Company. The population of the region is roughly 209,020 and the median household income hovers around $19,996.

In 1982, the Private Industry Council of Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben counties administered all funding available under the Job Training Partnership Act. In 1999, due to the legislative mandate of WIA, that entity evolved into the CSS Workforce Development Board. Stemming from the core of the school-to-work partnership, the Youth Council was chartered in 1999 under the authority of the CSS Workforce Development Board.

There are currently 30 youth council members, consisting of representatives from the community colleges, business community, young adults, housing authority, parents, unions, and other human service agencies. Appointments to the Youth Council were deliberate and both the schools and the private sector are well represented. Members were chosen based on their interest, dedication, and commitment. The chief elected official in the area and WIB members made recommendations for membership beyond the required representatives. In a few instances, the chair hand-picked individuals. All members that were interviewed on this site visit concurred that the dedication and commitment of each member is one reason why the council is successful. Like the PIC before it, the CSS Workforce Development Board takes a "hands-off" approach to Youth Council, because of the collective quality of the group, and it lets the council members set the policy agenda and expend funds as they see appropriate.

The Youth Council funds four large youth program operators in the region: SA Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES), SCT BOCES, Catholic Charities, and EOP. Within these larger programs are several subcontracts with smaller organizations, contracted to provide the complete set of program elements in a youth development system. The entire Youth Council budget is about $3 million. The Youth Council receives roughly $1.6 million in funds from TANF and WIA – most of which comes from WIA formula funds, and the rest comes from TANF funding. The remaining $1.4 million comes from grant funds.

In New York State, TANF funds go directly from the state to the local WIB. Because the Youth Council has a semi-autonomous relationship with the WIB, all TANF youth funds go directly to the Youth Council to expend. $1.4 million comes from grant funds raised last year, of which 10 percent goes directly to the local Workforce Investment Board for administration. The Youth Council has also received an extension for school-to-work funding.

The mission of the CSS Youth Council is to design a single, comprehensive workforce development system for all young adults in the Chemung-Schuyler-Steuben region. Its primary goal is to identify the constantly changing needs of young people and find or create programs to meet those needs. It occupies a comfortable position between the school and the business community, brokering

with both for the most effective service to young adults. To do that, the Youth Council connects new programs with existing programs to create a seamless service delivery system.

## Site Profile

### Youth Involvement

The Chemung-Schuyler-Steuben Youth Council is a smart organization comprised of youth specialists and other interested members of the community from throughout the large, three-county region. It is an organization that has embraced change and gone beyond the legislative mandate of WIA to create a larger, collaborative approach to serving young adults and gain the respect of the community. Using the power of local professionals and the expertise they bring to bear on the community and to the Youth Council, policy decisions are thoughtful and focused on the customer.

Their purpose and mission, however, is squarely where it should be: on the young adults. In fact, youth play a particularly important role on the council, holding five seats and often invited as guest presenters. At any one meeting, at least four young adults present and actively participate. For specific projects or programming considerations, members of the Youth Council conduct focus groups with samples of young people in one of their youth programs to ascertain their thoughts and perspectives on the issues. For the upcoming program year, program operators will be required to bring a young adult with them to each Youth Council meeting to ensure a youth voice in all decisions.

### Using the RFP Process to Encourage Collaboration

Partnership among service providers was an important touchstone of the system that the CSS Youth Council wanted to create. Through the use of RFP competitive process, CSS required that individual service providers bidding to become program operators combine their capacity with other providers and form strong, comprehensive partnerships. Every youth service provider that attended the bidder's conference left in some form of a partnership. In their responses to the RFP, bidders had to list exactly which service providers would be involved and how each would contribute. The idea of collaboration was so important to the Youth Council that it returned proposals that lacked the collaboration piece, asking the bidders to find partners and resubmit. As a result, services have been consolidated under four broad program operators, and there are service providers within each program to provide the ten program elements of effective youth development as required by WIA.

### Leveraging Resources

The relationship of the CSS Youth Council with technical preparation schools and community colleges is important. The Youth Council office is physically located on the campus of the Shemung County BOCES, and the chair of the Youth Council also serves as executive director of the Career Development Council at the BOCES. This joint position serves well at connecting local education and employment policymakers. More importantly, the in-kind resources the Career Development Council provides, such as staff assistance, office space, and the absence of overhead charges, help stabilize the Youth Council and provide an internal infrastructure for getting things done.

### Build on Existing, Successful Partnerships

The CSS Youth Council was well poised to make the transition to WIA primarily because its core stems from a preexisting and successful school-to-work partnership. Interpersonal relationships, as well as an interest in keeping youth issues at the top of the agenda, were soundly in place: the STW partnership had long been an effective local body and had met three times per month for five years.

Instead of starting from nothing at the passage of WIA, the Youth Council assessed the value of each of the STW partnership's members and invited the dedicated individuals to become members. This group forms the backbone of the council today, and three years into WIA implementation it remains the same group of dedicated people.

### The Value of Training and Technical Assistance

The importance it places on training and technical assistance is a significant contributing factor in the CSS Youth Council's effectiveness. At the onset of WIA implementation, the Youth Council chair hired a consultant from the state employment and training association to spend time training council members on their roles and responsibilities. This further helped the council understand the opportunity WIA presented in terms of creating a youth-serving system in the community as opposed to individual, disparate programs.

This training and technical assistance has set the foundation for members to have the freedom to think more creatively and keeps turnover among members low. It also allows for more autonomy from the WIB in terms of the council's ability to make policy and funding decisions.

### Working with the One-Stops

The CSS Youth Council spent significant time and resources on developing an identity that would make it well received and well recognized by young people

and help it encourage them to visit local One-Stop Centers. Marketing materials are disbursed throughout the region marketing the "Job Squad" and, once there, youth service representatives are identified by name badges with the Job Squad logo on it. The Youth Council is also working with the One-Stop system to provide information about youth services at their "mini One-Stop"—a bus that travels throughout rural parts of the region. During the most recent program year, 542 young adults went through the One-Stop system, and most of them were 18 to 21 years old.

## WIA Reauthorization

When asked about changes the council would lobby for in the reauthorization of WIA, the chair reported she would lobby for fewer restrictions on eligibility. In her opinion, some young adults want early work experiences but do not qualify for them because their household incomes exceed the guidelines. With a less-restrictive income-eligibility requirement, the CSS Youth Council could serve more young people and make program operation less cumbersome.

## Contact

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## List of Interviewees

Nancy Blake, Chair
Chemung-Schuyler-Steuben Youth Council

Jamie Wood, youth member
Chemung-Schuyler-Steuben Youth Council

Emily Welty, youth member
Chemung-Schuyler-Steuben Youth Council

Mary Ann Thomas, Dresser Rand Company
Private Sector Representative

David Hill, Pro-Action
Program Operator

Ronald Gaeta, New York State Department of Labor
WIB member

Sue Brill, Department of Social Services—Steuben County
Youth Council member

Scott Hoffman, youth participant

Corey Vargson, youth participant

## Marion County Youth Council

## Indianapolis Private Industry Council
## Indianapolis, Indiana

### Best Practices and Key Lessons

- The Workforce Investment Board was strategic in teaming a local business executive with a youth service professional to lead the Youth Council. The chair is well-connected in the business community and brings many lessons from the private sector, while the vice-chair has a strong background in youth issues.

- Half of the Youth Council members also sit on the Workforce Investment Board, helping ensure that youth issues are at the forefront of WIB planning efforts.

- The Indianapolis Private Industry Council has organized its entire youth program funding under the umbrella of the Youth Employment and Development Network. Through the YEDN, IPIC has funded eight Marion County youth programs, with a combination of WIA and Lilly Endowment dollars. In doing so, IPIC can provide more youth with comprehensive services.

- By leveraging its resources, IPIC has given youth access to a flexible voucher system. IPIC has designed a flexible voucher policy that addresses barriers that impede successful employment. Funded by the Lilly Endowment, the vouchers can be accessed for the following services: specialized postsecondary training, post-placement training and retention services, and "barrier busting."

### Youth Council History

Marion County covers 396 square miles in central Indiana and includes 16 cities and towns. The county has a total population of 860,450. Indianapolis, the state capital, is the largest city and home to 91 percent of the population. Indianapolis, considered the racing capital of the world, is home to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway; a significant contributor to the economy is visitor spending at this and other sporting venues. Indianapolis is also the world headquarters of Eli Lilly and Company, a leading pharmaceutical firm.

The Indianapolis Private Industry Council was formed in 1983 as a recipient and distribution source for Job Training Partnership Act funds in Marion County. After many years of delivering a wide and diverse range of services to job seekers, in 1995, IPIC determined that job training and workforce development programs

were best delivered through a competitive strategy. This organizational shift enabled IPIC to focus on broad-based workforce issues facing the county by contracting out employment and training services to local, community-based organizations.

In 1998, when the Workforce Investment Act was signed, IPIC was well-poised to implement WIA, having transitioned from a service provider to an oversight entity, providing technical assistance, training, and funding to providers. Indiana opted to be a WIA Fast Track state and implemented the Adult and Dislocated Worker provisions of the Workforce Investment Act as of July 1, 1999. IPIC became the site for the Workforce Investment Board for Marion County, administering WIA funds pursuant to the WIB-LEO Agreement.

The Marion County Youth Council was formed in July 1999, also in response to the WIA mandate. The WIB was strategic in teaming a local business executive with a youth service professional to lead the council. The chair is fairly new to the youth arena, but he shares a strong passion for youth issues and brings a fresh, unbiased perspective to the council. He is well-connected in the business community and brings lessons from the private sector. The vice-chair has a solid background in youth issues and knowledge of how community-based organizations operate, acquired through his experience as the president of the Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc., a youth-focused intermediary organization.

While the Youth Council is relatively new, many of its members have been active in the youth arena for years. In addition to the president of Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc., members include a school district superintendent, a principal, and a director of career/technical programs. The 20 members include representation from leaders in the private sector (an insurance company executive vice-president), K-12 (a school district superintendent and principal), postsecondary education (a state college chancellor), and human services (a housing agency director of resident relations). In an effort to be a policy and planning body, the Youth Council chose to limit the number of service providers.

Ten Youth Council members also sit on the Workforce Investment Board, and three of the ten have voting privileges. The overlap between the Youth Council and the WIB is a strong indication of the centrality of the youth agenda to the WIB. Commenting on this overlap, one interviewee noted, "The WIB and the community at large consider youth issues to be a top priority." The overall goal of the Youth Council is to develop a "comprehensive, coordinated youth development system" to provide services that prepare youth to become socially and economically self-sufficient.

## Site Profile

In 1997, in an effort to help IPIC move away from direct funding, the Lilly Endowment invited it to submit a proposal for designing a coordinated youth program funding approach. IPIC's proposal was successful and in late 1997 it received its first private foundation funding, a grant of $5 million from the Lilly Endowment for youth programming. This prompted the creation of a Youth Employment and Development Network that functions as an umbrella for all youth programs in Marion County.

The Lilly funds provided IPIC with flexibility in terms of youth programs funded and the populations served, although Lilly was particularly interested in reaching at-risk youth. When WIA was implemented, IPIC decided to blend WIA and Lilly funds to provide more youth with comprehensive services. The funding streams are organized so that Lilly dollars fund direct services and the voucher program (see below), and WIA Title I funds cover the costs of running and staffing the programs.

This structure is tied to the nature of how the funds are accessed. WIA dollars are accessed through a cost reimbursement method. Lilly uses fixed price contracts.

Eight Marion County youth programs targeted for youth ages 14-25 are funded through the Youth Employment and Development Network. The purpose of YEDN is to transition hard-to-employ youth and young adults to mainstream and private-sector employment. The network does this by providing neighborhood-based services through the eight programs.

The neighborhood service delivery strategy allows for decentralized access to services that link personal and family support services and employment-oriented services. For example, the Boner Community Center, one of the eight funded programs, has strong ties to its immediate community and provides educational, job readiness, job placement/retention, and training services to youth and young adults (ages 15-25). Boner Community Center has diverse funding streams that enable it to meet the many needs of individuals who come in for assistance. All the programs funded through YEDN are year-round and offer summer enrichment activities.

By leveraging its resources, IPIC has given youth access to a flexible voucher system. The voucher policy designed by IPIC is funded by the Lilly Endowment. The vouchers can be accessed to address the complex barriers that impede successful employment for at-risk youth. An array of services in the following categories are funded through the voucher fund:

- *Specialized Postsecondary Training:* Vocational and/or educational training is conducted by an accredited postsecondary institution or short-

term training from a provider with recognized certification to enable an individual to seek gainful employment upon completion.

- *Post-Placement Training and Retention Services:* Resources enable an individual to enhance and/or improve current skills to retain current employment and/or advance to new employment opportunities upon completion. Individuals must be employed for a minimum of six months to be eligible.

- *"Barrier Busting":* Funding for services necessary to enable an individual to participate in training and/or employment may be used before, during, or after job placement. Services may include, for example, child care and transportation.

IPIC has outlined a dollar limit in each category ($1,500-$5,000) to serve as guidance in submitting requests for these funds. YEDN service providers guide youth through an application process that includes completing a voucher request form and a brief narrative documenting their need.

The flexible nature of the voucher policy makes it an innovative approach to expanding services for youth. Vouchers can be used when existing federal, state, and private funds are unable to assist a YEDN participant. They go directly to youth services and are not tied up at the service-provider level. There is usually a very quick turn around: less than two weeks between the voucher request and a check in hand.

An example of the voucher policy in action: IPIC has a Memorandum of Understanding with an alternative school in a local township. Fifteen thousand dollars have been earmarked to help youth stay in school. Youth who need to overcome a barrier in order to remain in school can access these funds for services such as child care, transportation, or meals. This also illustrates the Youth Council's connection with the alternative school system.

The Marion County Youth Council experienced common start-up issues. Perhaps the most challenging was getting a regular cohort of members to attend meetings. Without a regular cohort of members or clearly defined roles, the Youth Council struggled to move ahead. When the chair of the Youth Council retired from the WIB, the council seized the opportunity to restructure itself in order to be more effective.

Around the same time, IPIC and the Youth Council leadership attended an Indiana School-to-Work Intermediary Academy. The academy presented a forum for the team to reflect on their accomplishments to date and address their goals for the future. The Youth Council leadership and IPIC staff used their time together to begin to:

- Sharpen the mission and vision of the Youth Council;

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Youth Council members; and
- Reevaluate the current membership and strategize on how to target the recruitment of new members.

The team left the meeting with clearly defined tasks of what needed to be accomplished to move forward. The chair and co-chair discussed the new mission and commitment to the Youth Council at the December 2001 Youth Council meeting. A number of council members who were interviewed identified that meeting as the most productive: it outlined the direction the council was going. The extensive working session was instrumental in reenergizing the Youth Council and represented a major turning point. In speaking to the development of the Youth Council, one of the members described it as an "evolutionary experience, essential to growing as a Youth Council."

## WIA Reauthorization

In looking forward to the reauthorization of WIA, IPIC would like to see a change in the eligibility requirements to include students who are free or reduced fee lunch recipients. This would allow youth, whose parents are unwilling to go through the income documentation process multiple times, to access WIA services. It would also allow school-based service providers easier access to youth. In addition, IPIC would like to see the legislation address the onerous reporting requirements and simplify the performance standards governing WIA funded youth programs. Current standards are complex and virtually unmanageable at the provider level.

## Contacts

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## List of Interviewees

Kelley Gulley. President and Chief Operating Officer
Indianapolis Private Industry Council

Todd Payne, Youth Programs Coordinator
Indianapolis Private Industry Council

Ron Hoke, Director, Career, Technical, and Adult Education
Ben Davis High School

Stuart Peterson, Youth Council Chair
Executive Vice President, Pillar Group

John Brandon, Youth Council Vice-Chair
President, Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc.

Stacie Porter Bilger, Director of Education Policy
Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce

# Long Beach Youth Council
# Long Beach, California

## Best Practices and Key Lessons

- The Long Beach Youth Council has evolved rapidly in the past year. Once satisfied to map youth services and "flush out" small, effective youth-serving initiatives, the leadership has developed a vision of centralized case management plus a coherent network of youth services that put young people at the center. The council is creating an "all funds" strategy that leverages TANF funds, adult education dollars, Health and Human Services resources, and block grants.

- Early in its existence, the Youth Council supported the City of Long Beach's proposal for a Youth Opportunity Center to be funded by a Youth Opportunity Grant, but it was unsuccessful in its bid for federal dollars. Despite this setback, the Youth Council identified funds from a variety of sources to open the center, which has been in existence for about a year. In addition to WIA-funded service, it houses a GED and diploma-granting program for out-of-school youth, an after-school academic enrichment program, the school-to-career staff and consortium, and the CalWORKs-funded summer jobs program.

- The Youth Council is viewed as an extremely strong committee of the Workforce Development Board and is supported in its efforts to maximize its resources. For example, as much as possible, the council shifts services to 18-24 year-olds as appropriate to WIA adult-funded activities.

- The council has created a database of youth-serving organizations and conducted a survey of which WIA elements are provided by each. Its next step will be to validate its findings through a community-building strategy. For this effort, the council plans to convene "best practice forums" around four key areas: academic services, youth development, youth leadership, and career transitions. It will ask survey respondents with self-reported strengths in each area to share their practices with others in the field.

- Next, the council will both look at national quality standards and engage service providers in sharing their standards of performance. Also, it will develop quality benchmarks for the ten WIA elements around which all providers can coalesce.

- A strong history of school-to-career in Long Beach laid the groundwork for the formation of the current Youth Council. The school-to-career director is hired and funded through a combination of funds from the city, WIA, the K-12 system, and the local community college and university.

- Through an innovative leverage of WIA dollars, an educational enrichment program for out-of-school youth at the Youth Opportunity Center was launched with WIA funds. Over the long term, it will be funded with adult education dollars from the K-12 system, once the enrollment maximum is reached. This allows for the delayed enrollment that is typical of programs serving out-of-school youth.

## Youth Council History

Long Beach is an ethnically diverse community of about 500,000 just south of Los Angeles. Its population is about 35 percent white, 35 percent Latino, 15 percent African-American, and 15 percent Asian-American, although the white population is aging and the Latino and Asian-American populations fast-growing. Upper-income residents live primarily along the beach and lower-income residents more inland. The economy is heavily dependent on a few industries, including tourism and aerospace engineering, both of which have been hard-hit in the past year.

California was a late implementor of WIA, but the city's Private Industry Council foresaw WIA implementation and began forming a Youth Council to complement the city's School-to-Career Consortium efforts prior to receiving implementation funds. In creating the council, the PIC augmented its own membership with WIA-required members, such as juvenile justice representatives and youth. When the Workforce Development Board was created by the City of Long Beach, the Youth Council became the first committee of the board.

Youth Council staff and members feel they have the "right players" on board, with representatives across sectors, with access to resources—such as adult education dollars—and with the capacity for comprehensive strategic planning. In particular, the school-to-career foundation has brought business and K-16 representatives to the council. The youth voice is lacking at the table, but the council has identified an organization—Leadership Long Beach—that has the capacity to work with it on engaging youth in policy development.

There is little history of collaboration between youth service providers in Long Beach, so identifying providers and promoting collaboration has been a priority for the Youth Council. In this effort, it has worked closely with the Long Beach Youth Services NETWORK, a consortium of providers.

## Site Profile

### Mission: Comprehensive Services

The Long Beach Youth Council has extremely strong leadership with a clear understanding of the steps they need to take to bring the council's membership

along regarding their vision. In particular, the Youth Council chair is director of economic development at Long Beach City College and has been instrumental in moving her department from an opportunistic to a strategic driver agency that seeks dollars that can streamline services for both young people and businesses. By virtue of her position at the nexus of these sectors, she is familiar with the K-12, community college, university, and private-sector worlds, and she can articulate the Youth Council mission to a variety of audiences. She and several members of the Youth Council are clear on the vision of leveraging resources and institutions to meet the needs of youth; they also understand the challenge of "bringing along" other Youth Council members whose understanding may not be as sophisticated.

The Youth Council's mission is comprehensive—"to provide all youth with the tools required to build their resiliency, and promote life-long learning, and ... impact a young person's ability to break out of poverty"—and it has worked assiduously to educate members as to the "new paradigm" of WIA. Since the council's inception, a primary focus has been on mapping the youth providers in the city and beginning networking between providers. At the same time, it has developed a Youth Opportunity Center—without federal YOG funds—and recently began to develop a common understanding of how to connect WIA services and the Youth Opportunity Center through a centralized case management system.

The workforce development board executive director wisely chose his lead staff for WIA youth services to be someone with strong community connections and the capacity to bring together stakeholders from a variety of sectors. Cecile Walters, the director of the Youth Opportunity Center and coordinator of the Youth Council, comes to the job having had a long tenure in the public sector—most recently, as chief of staff for the city's vice mayor and only African-American on the city council—and a history of community activism, particularly around education reform issues.

The initial RFP process garnered "the same old" JTPA providers who served a limited youth population. Walters and the Youth Council spent a year identifying additional providers and educating the community about WIA. They held two "mixers" for youth-serving organizations to build networks and promote collaborations; participants in these events both explicitly and informally formed strategic collaborations to appropriately respond to the next year's RFP, which would require partnerships. The Youth Council then significantly revised the original RFP, with stripped-down language that clarifies WIA.

The most recent RFP has attracted far more proposals, totally about $2.7 million, from providers serving more diverse populations, reflecting heightened interest in and awareness of WIA. The council now faces the task of allocating its limited funds of about $800,000.

The Youth Council has also surveyed the 400 providers in its database regarding which of the ten WIA elements each provides. It has developed a mechanism to both validate the findings and build capacity around the ten elements: the council will invite those who indicated that they provide a particular service to a forum for sharing best practices, and the event will be open to the community.

Once the council has identified those providers who are exemplars in providing particular services, it will begin a collaborative process with providers to develop quality benchmarks to assess service delivery in that domain. For example, all those who provide leadership development will convene to share their standards, review any relevant standards from national organizations, and develop benchmarks for the community's provision of leadership development. In this way, the Youth Council will continue to build its network of providers and be able to "certify" providers as offering quality services.

At the same time, the Youth Opportunity Center has gotten off the ground, and the Youth Council has begun to think about leveraging the YOC for a centralized case management system that connects all youth to certified providers. Members of the Youth Council are beginning to conceptualize what this would mean for service providers: rather than receiving WIA funding for particular programs, the dollars would "follow the youth" for particular services.

**Resources**

Because the Greater Long Beach Workforce Development Bureau, which supports the Workforce Development Board, sits inside city government, it can integrate funds from a variety of sources. The Youth Opportunity Center is funded through Community Development Block Grant funds, WIA, school-to-career, adult education, and county TANF dollars. It launched its newest initiative, a diploma-granting program for out-of-school youth, with WIA dollars but will fund the effort with adult education funds once it reaches full enrollment.

Similarly, when California developed a plan to allocate TANF Performance Bonus dollars for welfare prevention, the Workforce Development Bureau developed a new program at the high school using TANF and WIA dollars and school-to-career staff to provide case management and tutoring for ninth graders (both WIA-eligible and not) reading below the 25$^{th}$ percentile. Collaborating partners provide leadership training, after-school tutoring, and counseling around teen parenting, while Youth Opportunity Center staff provide case management services. Workforce Development Bureau staff see this as a major opportunity for the workforce development system to be a career development advocate for both WIA and non-WIA youth within the public schools.

## WIA Reauthorization

Long Beach Youth Council leaders expressed concern about the lack of capacity building from the state or federal governments to help communities determine the parameters of the new system in the early years of implementation. Like many states, California did little at the time to assist local communities as they sought to make the transition from JTPA to WIA. Youth Council leaders would like to see more explicit language in WIA reauthorization concerning use of the 15 percent state set-aside for capacity building at the local level—a role the state of California has now taken on with some energy.

Long Beach Youth Council leaders would also like to see more explicit language in TANF reauthorization that encourages leveraging of WIA and TANF dollars. For example, they would like to see language specifying that the appropriate use of TANF block grants includes the development of youth career pathways that can break cycles of poverty. Similarly, they would like to see the legislation explicitly address the eligibility of children of people receiving school lunch services, with clarification that WIA wages will not adversely impact family cash assistance for those receiving TANF funds.

Long Beach local leaders would like to see flexibility of the Youth Council membership requirement. They believe the mandate to include particular institutional representatives on the Youth Council slowed the start-up process significantly and may not reflect local needs and issues.

Long Beach's Greater Workforce Development Board and Youth Council is situated within the city government, posing both strategic strengths—in particular, opportunities for leveraging resources—and challenges: centralizing case management services in a city-run agency can raise concerns about "big government," and some wonder whether the city is the appropriate partner to play this role. In addition, although this structure creates an administrative layer—every contract must go through City Council—it has also educated the City Council about youth and workforce development issues.

## Contact

Cecile Harris Walters, Coordinator, Youth Opportunity Center, 562.570.4715

## List of Interviewees

Lupe Alferez
General Manager, Sears

Gloria Cordero
Co-Chair, Youth Leadership Long Beach

Minnie Douglas
President, Leadership Long Beach

Max Fraley
Director, Adult Career and Technical Education
Long Beach Unified School District

Evelyn Knight
Executive Director, Atlantic Community Economic Development Corporation

Marcia Lynn
Executive Director, School-to-Career Consortium

Lynne Miller
Director, Office of Economic Development, Long Beach City Council

Cecile Harris Walters
Coordinator, Youth Opportunity Center

Ray O. Worden
Manager, Workforce Development Bureau

# Montgomery County Youth Council
# Dayton, Ohio

## Best Practices and Key Strategies

- Montgomery County has a unified Department of Job and Family Services that administers both WIA and TANF and integrates workforce development and human services in a single agency. This is possible because WIA and TANF are administered by the state but run by counties in Ohio.

- There is a strong community consensus on an agenda for youth that focuses on prevention for in-school youth, reengagement for out-of-school youth, and educational and career advancement to self-sufficiency. This consensus is the result of a continuity of high-level government, business, and community leadership spanning nearly two decades.

- A seven-year, community-wide planning process concluded that it is necessary to address personal, community, and labor market barriers simultaneously in order to make a meaningful difference for youth and families. This finding led to an emphasis on sustainable system change and integration of workforce development and human services to provide a comprehensive array of services for young people and families.

- A key finding emerging from the community-wide process is that system change should focus on out-of-school youth. Data showing the large number of out-of-school youth, the cost for the county to provide services for them, and their impact on the quality of community life played a critical role in building pubic support for a five-year, $22.5 million out-of-school youth initiative that integrates multiple funding streams, including a $5 million, private-sector commitment. The process of developing of a comprehensive system of services for youth began before WIA and goes well beyond WIA requirements.

- The Montgomery County Youth Council operates within a unique structure. In addition to the WIA-mandated Workforce Policy Board, Montgomery County has four interrelated councils: Youth Council, Employers Council, Job Center Council, and the Adult Education and Training Council. Interlocking membership on the four councils and the policy board promotes synergy. Key community leaders who serve on the Youth Council also serve on the Workforce Policy Board. This structure provides a seamless transition from youth services to adult services and ensures that employers' skill needs are explicit and drive workforce development.

- Youth are served in one of the nation's largest and most effective One-Stop Centers, an 8.5-acre Job Center at which 47 partners provide a broad array of comprehensive workforce development and human services for youth and families. A Youth Works Area is set aside for education, training, human services, and case management for young people. The staff members are experienced in working with youth and customize services to meet individual needs. Specified times are reserved for youth to use the Job Bank so they can get additional hands-on experience.

- The integration WIA and TANF with flexible county funding and private-sector resources enables the Youth Council to blend multiple funding streams and resources in going beyond WIA mandates to meet the needs of youth. The deputy director of the Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services, which integrates WIA and TANF, serves as staff for the Youth Council and ensures access to integrated WIA and TANF resources. Flexible county revenues and private-sector funds, which enable the Youth Council to build a comprehensive system of youth services, are driven by accountability for results: to sustain resources, the Youth Council must go back to the community and business and government leaders.

- Sinclair Community College plays a lead role in the delivery of services for youth and the development of a youth policy agenda focused on advancement. It plays this role through its membership on the Youth Council and Workforce Policy Board, partnerships with K-12 systems, and leadership of the out-of-school initiative. The community college has the credibility to bring business, government, community leaders, and 16 school districts to the table to provide comprehensive services for youth.

- Strong connections to employers and business leaders mean that services for youth are linked to labor market skill needs and employment opportunities. The Employers Council frames labor market needs, and the other three councils develop education and training strategies that address those needs.

## Youth Council History

The Montgomery County Youth Council serves Dayton and surrounding Montgomery County. High levels of poverty are characteristic of many Dayton neighborhoods, and the county has a serious out-of-school youth problem. There is a 43.5 percent dropout rate in the Dayton Public Schools, and about 5,600 county youth aged 15-19 are not in school. In addition, many high school graduates lack adequate basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics.

The Youth Council has evolved from a long-term community process to build consensus on meeting the needs of low-income youth and their families. That process that began in 1987 with the seven-year Dayton Self-Sufficiency Program, long before WIA or welfare reform. Since then, there has been strong continuity of business and community leadership in mobilizing efforts to serve youth. The Self-Sufficiency Program brought the community together around a strategy to integrate separate workforce development and human services agencies into a single Department of Job and Family Services, which oversees both WIA and TANF, and to create an innovative Job Center in which 47 partners provide an integrated, comprehensive array of workforce development and human services for nearly one million youth and adults each year.

The self-sufficiency process set the stage for a county task force that made the needs of out-of-school youth a key community priority. The process focused on three statistics that identified meeting the needs of out-of-school youth as central to achieving the goals of the self-sufficiency process. The Out-of-School Task Force resulted in a $22.5 out-of-school youth initiative, led by Sinclair Community College, that brought county government, business, community-based organizations, and 16 school districts to the table around a unified youth agenda. The Youth Council plays the lead role in implementing this community-wide youth initiative and building and strengthening community-wide collaboration.

Over the past 15 years, there has been strong continuity of leadership in community-wide efforts to serve low-income youth and their families. Two members of the Youth Council, including the chair, were members of the Self-Sufficiency Program and the Out-of-School Youth Task Force. Both also served as chairs of the Dayton Foundation and the Sinclair Community College boards and are members of the Workforce Policy Board. In addition, the president of Sinclair Community College served on the Out-of-School Youth Task Force and is a member of the Workforce Policy Board.

## Site Profile

The Montgomery County Youth Council operates at the center of a strong, community-wide commitment to serving youth in a comprehensive way. Government officials, high-level business leaders, and respected community leaders are all on the same page about the need and strategies for meeting the needs of youth. There has been a tangible commitment from government and business. Business has lent important support to tax levy campaigns that have yielded resources for serving youth and raised significant private-sector resources which allow government officials to allocate substantial flexible resources. Together, business and government are the engine driving change in local and state policy. Leaders who have played a key role in the long-term community process to develop a comprehensive system approach to serving youth are members of the Youth Council and Workforce Policy Board.

The Youth Council can provide an integrated array of education, training, and human services to youth and their families because of the community decision to integrate WIA and TANF into a single Department of Job and Community Services and passage of a comprehensive tax levy for human services. Integration of multiple public and private-sector funding streams is the norm rather than the exception.

Sinclair Community College plays an important role in increasing capacity to meet the needs of youth by overseeing out-of-school alternative education services. With the college's stature and credibility, it can bring business and community leaders as well as school systems to the table to work in concert to develop and carry out a plan to serve young people. Sinclair also provides pathways to educational and career advancement, both within the college and through transitions to the college from community-based education and training services. For example, the involvement of Sinclair faculty in YouthBuild makes it possible for students in that program to also earn a Sinclair construction certificate.

Data is used strategically to build community support and consensus around an agenda for youth, identify priorities for action, and measure results to drive continuous improvement. To drive the campaign to build public support for a large, multi-year, out-of-school youth initiative, the leaders focused on a small set of key statistics: there are 5,600 out-of-school youth in Montgomery County; virtually all low-income people who seek services as the Job Center do not have a high school diploma; 69 percent of the county budget is spent directly or indirectly on youth and adults who did not graduate high school; and 80 percent of the people in the criminal justice system lack a high school diploma.

The Montgomery County Family and Children First Council has developed six comprehensive outcomes that measure success in meeting the needs of youth and families. These outcomes, for which there are specific indicators, range from access to health care, affordable housing, and child care, to children being prepared for learning when they start school, to access to lifelong learning and employment that provides a living wage and benefits. There is ongoing assessment of the resources available to achieve these outcomes, the impact they are having, and areas to focus improvement.

## WIA Reauthorization

The members of the Montgomery County Youth Council believe that change in eligibility requirements, performance standards, and allowable services would enable them to meet the needs of young people more effectively.

Under JTPA, young people who qualified for the free lunch program were automatically eligible for services. Under WIA, the eligibility process and income verification process are burdensome to both young people and service providers.

The performance standard for older youth that requires a $3,500 increase in earnings is difficult to meet, especially in the current economic climate. This can be an obstacle to providing services that enable youth to increase their earnings but to a lesser extent.

While supporting the transition from stand-alone summer youth programs to comprehensive services that work with young people from beginning to end, The members of the Montgomery County Youth Council believe that some young people only need short-term interventions and could benefit greatly from a stand-alone summer program that could help them find employment and reinforce their engagement, or reengage them, in education.

## Contact

Linda Shepard, 937.496.6700, Fax: 937.225.6203

## List of Interviewees

James Brown
Member, Youth Council
Director, Out-of-school Youth Resource Center

Michael Carter
Program Manager, Fast Forward Center

Sue Daily
Member, Youth Council
Assistant County Commissioner; Director, Family and Children First Council

Danetta Graves
Member, Youth Council
Director, Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services

John Moore
Member, Youth Council
Chair, Parity 2000

Linda Shepard
Youth Council Staff
Deputy Director, Montgomery County Department of Job and Family Services

Ned Sifferlen
President, Sinclair Community College
Member, Workforce Policy Board

Fred Smith
Youth Council Chairperson
Huffy Foundation

Jerry Tatar
Chairman of the Board, MeadWestvaco Corporation
Chair, Sinclair Community College Board of Trustees

David White
Program Manager, Fast Forward Center

Gary Williamson
Director, Job Center
Member, Workforce Policy Board
Chair, Job Center Partners Council

# Portland Youth Council
# Portland, Oregon

## Best Practices and Key Strategies

- The Portland Youth Council builds on a history of state education and workforce policy that emphasizes advancement to skills and credentials for family-wage jobs, integration of education and workforce development, and a strong community college role in workforce development and literacy.[4]

- The Youth Council developed a clear vision of the changes in services necessary to make the transition from JTPA to WIA. Its focus is on developing a workforce system accessible to all youth, building stronger relationships with employers, and providing education and training services that are more aligned with workplace skill needs and lead to opportunities for advancement.

- Youth as well as employers have a strong voice on the Youth Council so that the needs of both sets of customers drive services. Five voting youth members serve on the council, and a Youth Advisory Board was created to establish a forum for youth to discuss policy issues and develop positions. The YAB meets in advance of each Youth Council meeting to discuss the upcoming agenda and agree on the voice of youth at the meeting. The YAB has been involved in several initiatives to involve youth customers in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of services for youth, including a secret shopper project and community planning.

- The council also aligns provider services more closely with the WIA focus on workplace skill needs and relationships with employers. To accomplish this, it systematically uses the RFP process, outcome performance measures, and technical assistance.

- The strong role that community colleges play on the Youth Council makes it possible to link education and training services to pathways to educational and career advancement.

- The Youth Council has developed a comprehensive strategic plan that combines change in provider services with a broader system change agenda explicitly designed not to create a dual system but to provide access to "first chance" learning standards for all youth.

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4 The Portland Youth Council serves three counties, including the City of Portland.

- Strong ties to the Workforce Investment Board are critical to moving a youth agenda. Both in shared membership and vision, the Youth Council has had strong support from the WIB for the vision to provide a coordinated systems of workforce services for youth.

- Having the right people on the Youth Council—people with a passion for meeting the needs of youth, a vision consistent with the Youth Council strategic plan, and the ability to drive change within large institutions—is critical. This makes it possible for the Youth Council to build institutional partnerships on a system level, play an effective policy role, and leverage the services of key institutions, such as community colleges, in ways that increase the effectiveness of WIA-funded services.

## Youth Council History

To a large extent, the Portland Youth Council has been shaped by the history of state policy on education reform and workforce development in Oregon. In 1988, a committee composed of business, labor, education, and government representatives examined the question, "How should Oregon shape its economic future?" The result, adopted in 1989, was Oregon Shines, a strategic plan for the next two decades. At the same time, the Oregon Progress Board, created to steward the strategic plan, created the Oregon Benchmarks, adopted as law in 1991, that defined strategic goals with measurable outcomes and targets for improvement.

In 2000, the state adopted the Cross-System Performance Measurement system to assess the performance of the entire workforce investment system, not just programs funded through federal revenue streams. Key indicators include: employment placement, employment retention, wage gain, placement in postsecondary education or training, demonstrated competency in workforce readiness skills, increase in basic skills proficiency, completion of educational degree or certification, and completion of occupational skills training.

Oregon took steps to integrate education and workforce development to achieve these ambitious goals for educational and economic advancement. It adopted the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century, a sweeping education reform plan, which includes a focus on high-performance skills essential in the high-skill workplace as well as traditional academic skills. Toward this end, community colleges became the primary workforce development and adult basic education provider, overseen by a new Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development. The Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Policy was created in 1997.

Local political leaders played a key role in pushing change for low-income people. In the mid-1990s, elected officials realized that economic development in Oregon had little impact on poverty in Portland. As a result, they radically

restructured the Private Industry Council and replaced it with Worksystems, Inc, a board that was similar in make-up to the current Workforce Investment Boards. In addition, the city pooled all its workforce development training dollars to create a coherent, citywide system.

With this legacy, the Youth Council places a strong emphasis on integrating education and workforce development, focuses on developing higher-order skills, education, and career advancement, links education and workforce development to labor market skill needs, and uses outcome performance measures to drive change toward improved performance.

## Site Profile

The Portland Youth Council built a consensus that the transition from JTPA to WIA would require change both in the services that are provided and who is served. This includes change: 1) from services for at-risk youth who meet eligibility guidelines to a comprehensive workforce system accessible to all youth; 2) from summer programs to comprehensive year-round services; 3) from stand-alone education and youth development to education and training aligned with the workplace and employer skills needs; 4) from a focus on entry-level skills, with a GED often seen as a terminal outcome, to an emphasis on skills and credentials for advancement; and 5) from a focus on delivering services to a focus on achieving specific outcomes.

Worksystems, Inc., the intermediary organization that implements WIA and the Youth Council, is developing policy recommendations that move from a supply-side to a demand-side model and that emphasize outcomes in addition to customer-driven, quality services. Integration of education and workforce development is a key issue in the transition from JTPA to WIA. Under JTPA, education programs were administered through the Department of Education and workforce programs through the Department of Labor, resulting in separate silos that rarely talked to each other. The Youth Council made a conscious decision not to create a dual system for at-risk youth while "regular" young people went through the K-12 system and met state education reform standards. The ability to integrate education and workforce development is seen as a key benefit of WIA.

The Youth Council uses council membership, the RFP process, and performance measures as change strategies for driving the transition from JTPA to WIA. The council defines its role as going beyond WIA-mandated services by playing a policy role to drive broader system change and build institutional partnerships at a system level. For example, the Youth Opportunity Center is developing a contextualized, project-based-learning, GED curriculum that can be disseminated more broadly. Provider services directly funded by WIA are seen as only one part of the broader system change agenda that includes leveraging other funding streams, including local education and training resources, and leveraging services provided by key institutions such as community colleges.

The composition of the council is designed to give both youth and employers, its dual customers, a strong voice and ensure that their needs drive policy and system change. Traditionally, youth services had focused on teaching entry-level skills. Focus groups found that young people want specific skills that can help them compete in the economy, and that youth services have to do much more than help them get their first job or a terminal GED. The council looked to Portland Community College as a key institution to promote an advancement agenda.

Youth Council membership is designed to give employers a major policy voice and enable employer skill needs to drive service outcomes. Several business representatives have been actively involved in education reform at the state level for many years, and this shapes their belief that all youth should have an opportunity to achieve the same rigorous standards. The Youth Council provides an institutional vehicle that allows high-level business leaders who have a passion about youth to have a local voice, for the first time, in the development of a comprehensive system of youth services at the local level.

The council has adopted the Employer Participation Model, which connects youth with employment and career opportunities leading to living wage jobs and provides employers with a pool of qualified applicants. It uses this model to drive continuous improvement by making employer skill needs explicit and transparent and providing a feedback loop that identifies how well services and programs help young people develop the skills that employers need. Employer representatives, as well as the community college representative, have the ability to move their institutions to support the council's system change efforts.

The Youth Council has consciously used the RFP process and performance measures to move beyond the JTPA-to-WIA transition phase. The RFP emphasizes a workplace connection and relationships with employers as well as specific outcomes for employment and completion of education and training programs leading to a GED or certificate. In the first round of RFPs, only three of the thirty-two applications were approved because of a lack of focus on the workplace, relationships with employers, and specific outcome measures. Worksystems, Inc., which staffs both the Youth Council and the Workforce Investment Board, provided technical assistance to help providers reapply and design services consistent with the council's standards for WIA-funded services.

Portland Community College plays a major role on the Youth Council in helping to develop a comprehensive system of services for youth. PCC, which has been involved on the Youth Council from the beginning and whose representative recently became chair, offers a capacity to promote educational and career advancement by creating pathways to postsecondary education and training from services focused on entry-level skills and employment. PCC provides all education and training services at the Youth Opportunity Center and at SE Works, a community-based provider that operates a One-Stop Center that serves youth.

PCC staff are developing a contextual, project-based-learning curriculum for the GED program that will transform GED teaching and learning and provide transitions to postsecondary education and training. Through its on-site staff at the Youth Opportunity Center and SE Works, as well as its role in the alternative school network, PCC is building pathways that can make the GED a step to postsecondary education and training, rather than a terminal degree. Even though PCC services are not funded with WIA resources, the Youth Council is able to leverage its education and training services as an important part of a broader system of services for youth.

The Youth Council made a conscious decision to limit the role of providers to one voting member, who represents WIA-funded providers through the Contractor Steering Committee. This focuses the council on a policy role, with discussions of programmatic issues taking place in other venues.

The Youth Council provides an important forum for a public debate about key issues that get to the heart of its vision of the transition from JTPA to WIA and have broader implications for the fields of alternative education and youth development. Given limited resources, how can the Youth Council serve all youth while still ensuring that the needs of the most at-risk youth are met? What is the proper balance between services for in-school and out-of-school youth? Given the tension between rigor and retention, should services for at-risk youth focus on helping them attain the same state education reform standards that apply to mainstream K-12 education, or are dual standards more appropriate?

## WIA Reauthorization

There is a need to improve service coordination and integration of existing resources to make it possible to provide the full continuum of services, including help with the academic, employment, basic needs, and personal and family issues that many youth need to become self-sufficient. There is an opportunity for employment-related programs, social service organizations, schools, and government to coordinate resources to serve youth in a more comprehensive, mutually reinforcing way. At the government level, services for youth are administered and funded by the Department of Labor, Department of Education, and Department of Health and Human Services. Each of these departments has multiple programs and funding streams. WIA reauthorization should provide incentives for collaboration and for integrating multiple funding streams to meet the needs of young people. This is particularly true in promoting further integration among services funded by the Department of Labor, such as WIA, Youth Opportunity, and Job Corps programs.

Strict WIA eligibility guidelines are an obstacle to developing a comprehensive system of youth services. There is a tension between meeting the needs of low-income, at-risk youth and making services accessible to a broad range of young people. The challenge lies in finding ways to build a system of services for youth

while meeting federally mandated eligibility requirements and targets for specific populations. In particular, there is need to better align eligibility requirements and performance standards for youth and adults to provide an incentive for youth and adult services to talk to one another and provide smooth transitions as young people move to adulthood.

If the goal is building a system that can serve all youth, a pool of flexible resources is needed. WIA funds are linked to eligibility standards and Youth Opportunity funds are linked to geography. There is a need for a pool of resources that can be used to build a system that goes beyond serving at-risk youth. While recognizing the need for accountability to achieving performance standards, providers need longer-term contracts to build organizational capacity and develop continuity of services. WIA reauthorization should find a more effective balance between the need for accountability and the need for organizational stability and continuity of services.

Performance measures are needed that assess the long-term effectiveness of individual services and the comprehensive youth system. Youth, particularly those who face multiple barriers, often need years of multiple services to move toward self-sufficiency. Performance measures assess final outcomes, such as attaining a GED, but not the intermediate steps or significant milestones that enable many youth to achieve such outcomes. Performance measures that assess longer-term impact will require capacity to track the progress of young people on a long-term basis.

**Contact**

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**List of Interviewees**

Peter Angstadt, President
Worksystems, Inc.

John Ball, former President
Worksystems, Inc.

Don Brown, Youth Council Member
Providence Hospital Employer Participation Model
Providence Academy

Kelly Henwood, Youth Council Staff, Youth Program and Policy Developer
Worksystems, Inc.

Linda Huddle, Manager Vocational Program, Alternative Learning Opportunities
Portland Community College

Hazel Malone, Member Youth Advisory Board
Rewarding Youth Achievement

Nan Poppe, Youth Council Chair, Dean of Adult and Continuing Education
Portland Community College

Vivian Scott, Provider representative on Youth Council
Youth Employment Institute

David Squire, Youth Council Chair at time of interview

Heidi Soderberg, SE Works

Kenny Sparks, SE Works

Jim Wernsing, Director of Youth Services
Worksystems, Inc.

Jessica Wornum, Member Youth Advisory Board
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# Hampden County Youth Council
# Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc.
# Springfield, Massachusetts

## Best Practices and Key Strategies

- Central to Hampden County's youth agenda is providing youth with quality work-based learning experiences. The Workforce Investment Board has organized its youth programs under the Regional Employment Board's Center for Youth Internships and Employment. In doing so, the REB can pool its resources (WIA, Massachusetts Department of Social Services, Governor's Youth At-Risk Initiative, Massachusetts Department of Education Connecting Activities, and private-sector funds) to serve additional youth as well as to provide youth with more comprehensive services.

- There is a strong state role, with leadership from Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp), the state's designated Title I WIA administrator.[5] CommCorp's Center for Youth Development and Education provides technical assistance and support to Youth Councils across Massachusetts and has been instrumental in guiding the work of the Hampden County Youth Council. CommCorp has leveraged funds to facilitate collaborations between the Department of Social Services and Youth Councils, thereby providing expanded case management to co-enrolled youth.

- Hampden County's local school-to-career partnerships have a history of success in recruiting employers and providing students with work-based learning experiences. The Youth Council used this foundation to further develop partnerships with the business community.

- There is a strong commitment in the state to using the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan as a tool to organize internships and ensure structured learning experiences for youth. The Work-Based Learning Plan, an assessment tool developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education, offers a way for employers, youth service providers, teachers, and youth to set and assess work-related learning goals in internships. Building on its rich school-to-career legacy, Hampden County gained support from the private sector for using the Work-Based Learning Plan.

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[5] Commonwealth Corporation is a quasi-public organization responsible for administering and delivering a wide range of public and privately funded initiatives designed to meet the labor needs of businesses, improve current and emerging worker's skills, foster career success through lifelong learning, and retain, sustain, improve, and create job-generating businesses.

All youth participating in an internship experience through the Center for Youth Internships and Employment use this tool.

## Youth Council History

*The purpose of the Hampden County Youth System is to provide an integrated and comprehensive training and development system in order to educate and motivate all young people so each individual is prepared to meet the challenges of adult responsibilities (work, family, and citizenship), is able to reach and use their full potential, and makes a successful transition into a job, and ultimately a career.*—Mission Statement

Hampden County covers 619 square miles in western Massachusetts and includes 23 cities and towns. Unemployment rates are low, and the region boasts reasonable prospects for economic growth, modest growth in per capita income, and such "quality of life" attributes as diverse communities, decreasing crime rates, and affordable housing.

Springfield, the largest city, has a solid history of providing innovative services to youth. As a leading site for Communities and Schools for Career Success ($CS^2$)—a nationally recognized, capacity-building initiative focused on school-to-career, education reform, and youth development—Springfield sought to create a coherent sequence of services and experiences to help young people make successful transitions to adult responsibilities of further education, training, and employment. In 1995, when Massachusetts was selected by the National School-to-Work Office for the first round of implementation grants, Springfield was well-positioned to apply for this funding. In receiving this grant, $CS^2$ expanded its advisory group so that it would constitute a school-to-work local partnership. As a result, $CS^2$ and the local partnership had a close collaborative relationship.

Likewise, the county had a strong school-to-career foundation in the form of five well-developed school-to-career partnerships. Prior to WIA, the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County had established a school-to-career subcommittee that consisted of representatives from these five partnerships, REB board members, leaders from community-based organizations, and labor.[6] When WIA was implemented, the Regional Employment Board became the local Workforce Investment Board. The school-to-career subcommittee became the starting point for the WIA-mandated Youth Council subcommittee.

A key leader in the community, who is a longstanding board member of the REB and now the Youth Council chair, also chaired the school-to-career subcommittee of the REB, providing continuity between the entities. Also key to

[6] The REB is a private, non-profit organization that promotes regional economic development through creating policies and making decisions about resources, strategies and services to build a quality workforce.

providing continuity was a longstanding REB member who is also the $CS^2$/school-to-career partnership liaison and a Youth Council member. Additional Youth Council members were recruited to ensure a balance in representation from the various sectors: K-12, postsecondary, business, and community-based organizations.

The WIB was conscientious in identifying and recruiting key players who shared a strong interest in and passion for youth issues. Community leaders with specific expertise and resources were targeted. Among the thirty-three Youth Council members are a president of the local Boys and Girls Club, executive directors of two community action agencies, and a community college dean.

## Site Profile

The Youth Council started with forty-five members, which over time dropped to a core group of thirty-three. Seven of these members also sit on the WIB. The Youth Council organized itself into four work groups: system development, resource mapping, labor market/career information, and youth internship initiatives. The work groups focused the participation of Youth Council members because each group had a clearly defined role.

- The *system development* work group was responsible for providing guidance, expertise, and oversight and recommending policy on WIB youth programs, ensuring coordination of program elements to maximize resources. This team has worked largely on designing a blueprint for the youth system.

- The *resource mapping* work group is responsible for conducting an inventory of youth-serving organizations, programs, and best practices of employment initiatives in order to coordinate resources where possible with other youth-serving committees, councils, and networks and to identify gaps in services.

- The *labor market/career information* work group is charged with addressing the alignment of youth education and training systems with labor market needs and youth services within the One-Stop delivery system.

- The *youth internship initiative* hopes to expand knowledge of opportunities for youth internships with area employers—increasing the quantity as well as quality of current internship opportunities.

The focus areas of the work groups are fluid: they can change to reflect the needs of Hampden County. Also, the activity levels of the groups are varied. The Youth Council meets once per month. Each working group generally meets once or twice per month.

The Hampden County Youth Council has used its preexisting foundation to further develop partnerships in the community. Springfield has established a track record of developing solid community connections through the thriving $CS^2$ initiative and the local school-to-career partnership. These initiatives have facilitated relationships with local business, school districts, and community-based organizations. As a result, key players from these sectors are members of the Youth Council and bring financial resources to the table. For example, the private sector has contributed about $120,000 toward the Center for Youth Internships and Employment, and when federal School-to-Work funding decreased, the school districts contributed 75 percent of the amount needed to sustain the local school-to-work partnerships. The Youth Council has also competed for additional resources from the U.S. Department of Labor and received a $20,000 grant aimed at enhancing WIA youth services at the One-Stop Center.

Across the state, there is a strong commitment to tie learning to employment, so a work-based experience is more than just a job for youth. This is accomplished through the use of the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan. The Work-Based Learning Plan is a tool that helps organize internships and ensure a structured learning experience. It drives student learning and productivity at the workplace, measures student skill gains in nine competency areas, and provides a solid framework for the student and supervisor to work together.

More than 13,000 students are using the Work-Based Learning Plan across Massachusetts, and school-to-career initiatives in Hampden County are also strongly committed to it, with over 3,000 Work-Based Learning Plans in use in the county. All youth participating in an internship experience through the Center for Youth Internships and Employment use the Work-Based Learning Plan. Furthermore, a subcommittee of the school-to-career partnerships and the WIB, with technical assistance from Holyoke Community College, has formalized this commitment through collaborating to implement the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan countywide.

Central to Hampden County's youth agenda is providing youth with quality work-based learning. The Center for Youth Internships and Employment, a virtual center designed to ensure that all youth have opportunities to participate in internships, is the umbrella for all youth programs and funding within the WIB: WIA, Department of Social Services, Governor's Youth At-Risk Initiative, School-to-Career Connecting Activities, and private-sector funds. The Center for Youth Internships and Employment was developed in response to a request from local employers to prepare the local workforce with basic skills necessary to enter the labor market. CYIE builds on the great success Hampden County has had with providing internships to youth through the local school-to-career partnerships, the strong base of employers willing to use interns and the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan to measure success, and the need to expand services to serve more youth. During its first six months of operation, CYIE provided internships to over seventy youth.

In transitioning from JTPA to providing comprehensive youth services under WIA, the Workforce Investment Board designated the two One-Stop Career Centers (FutureWorks and CareerPoint) as hubs for all youth programs. One-Stop staff connect youth to approved WIA service providers, who give youth access to the ten WIA program elements. The One-Stop Centers manage the Center for Youth Internships and Employment and are the point of entry for both out-of-school and in-school youth, ages 14-21. In-school youth can also access work-based learning experiences through their school districts' school-to-career programs.

Each One-Stop Center has a Center for Youth Internships and Employment coordinator available to guide youth through the process of securing an internship and doing a Work-Based Learning Plan. All internships offered through CYIE are paid. Youth can access CYIE for summer jobs, seasonal jobs, or part-time, year-round positions, continuing education, and training. As a result, with CYIE as the clearinghouse for youth services, the move from providing summer to year-round services for youth was not a big leap.

A close collaborative relationship exists between the One-Stops and the local school-to-career partnerships. The partnerships have a history of success in recruiting employers and providing students with work-based learning experiences, and they have shared their expertise and resources with the staff at the One-Stop Centers. All business partnerships connect formally through the Center for Youth Internships and Employment. The Youth Council was extremely successful in gaining financial support from key business partners to support CYIE.

Hampden County benefits from state-level assistance from CommCorp's Center for Youth Development and Education. CYDE provides technical assistance and support to Youth Councils across Massachusetts and has been instrumental in guiding the work of the Hampden County Youth Council. The nature of the technical assistance provided by CYDE is connected strongly to capacity building and system building. For example, CYDE has developed a "Stages of Development" Tool, a matrix that defines the options available to Youth Councils along a continuum from providing narrow programmatic services to developing a comprehensive system. The goal is to help move Youth Councils to adopt a wider vision, use more resources, and build practices to get to scale.

When the Hampden County Youth Council wanted to develop an organizing document with great impact and a far-reaching vision aligned with the youth initiatives of the WIB strategic plan, the Youth Council requested the assistance of CYDE. Having worked with Youth Councils across the state and around the country, CYDE brought a broad perspective to the table. Bill Diehl, the CYDE liaison to Hampden County, has been the primary technical assistance provider. He has been very helpful to REB because he has been their technical assistance provider for $CS^2$ and for school-to-career, giving him a history of knowing the players and understanding how the pieces fit together.

With the technical assistance from Bill Diehl, the system development work group designed the *Blueprint for the Youth Workforce Development System of Hampden County*. This document identifies key strategic questions the WIA Youth System needs to answer to accomplish its mission:

- How do we structure a comprehensive system?
- What programs and services need to be included in the comprehensive system?
- How do we build advocacy and involvement of key leaders and stakeholders?
- How do we identify outcomes and measure success?

The *Blueprint* outlines goals, objectives, action steps, and a timeline for each strategic question. It also identifies tangible tasks for the four work groups. CYDE's technical assistance was key to developing the *Blueprint*.

CommCorp has also been instrumental in leveraging funds to facilitate collaborations between the Massachusetts Department of Social Services and the Youth Council. By merging a portion of the 15 percent WIA Youth set-aside funds with department dollars targeted for the foster care system, CommCorp provided incentive grants to three Massachusetts sites—Brockton, Cape Cod, and Springfield (Hampden County)—to develop co-enrollment and outreach strategies for DSS foster youth to receive WIA services. The Hampden County Youth Council used these funds to pilot an expanded case management system for youth that were co-enrolled in WIA and DSS, offering workforce development support via WIA funding and social support through DSS funding.

Initially, in trying to identify foster care youth for co-enrollment, the Youth Council hit a major roadblock: confidentiality laws prohibited the disclosure of which youth receiving WIA services were DSS youth. Instead, the Youth Council determined a way to identify foster youth that were new to the system in order to co-enroll them. Co-enrolled youth are eligible for expanded case management. The original plan for the pilot was to hire a case manager at each One-Stop who is dedicated to co-enrolled youth. This person would function as the primary case manager, with the DSS and WIA case managers providing specific services as needed.

Implementation has proven to be complicated, and now co-enrolled youth receive case management from both a DSS case manager, who ensures that the adolescent has needed social services (housing, day care, clothing, and transportation), and a case manager based at the One-Stop, who ensures that the youth's education, career instruction, employment, and training needs are addressed.

## WIA Reauthorization

In looking forward to the reauthorization of WIA, the Regional Employment Board would like the legislation to address the needs of a younger cohort of youth (13-15 year olds). Even though WIA requires that youth programs serve 14- to 21-year-olds, the private sector sees a higher return on investment for employing older youth. The REB would like to leverage the private sector's commitment by using WIA dollars to create an organized system for younger youth.

In addition, the REB is concerned about its capacity to serve out-of-school youth. This cohort is staff intensive and generally expensive to serve, and by the time they enroll in WIA, their situation tends to be critical, if not desperate. The Youth Council finds that it must stretch its scarce resources between prevention and remediation, while providing services to those who fall between these extremes. Furthermore, the One-Stop Career System is pivotal in providing services to in-school and out-of-school youth, yet One-Stop Centers were not designed with the needs of this customer base in mind. In lieu of providing Youth Opportunity Centers to every community, legislation should address the issue of integrating youth customers into the existing One-Stop Career Centers.

## Contact

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## List of Interviewees

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Director of Youth Services, Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc.

Deb Wojcik
Human Resources, Mass Mutual

Earl Bonett
Youth Coordinator, FutureWorks

Rexene Picard
Executive Director, FutureWorks

Kevin Hamel
Executive Director, Valley Opportunity Council

Paul Bailey
Executive Director, Springfield Partner's for Community Action

Dr. Theresa Howard
Dean of Cooperative Education and Career Services, Holyoke Community College

Bruce Thompson
Director, Boys and Girls Clubs of America

Cleveland Burton
Organizational Development, American Saw & Manufacturing Company

John Niles
Commonwealth Corporation

William Diehl
Commonwealth Corporation

# Pima County Youth Opportunity Movement
# Tucson, Arizona

## Best Practices and Key Strategies

The transition from the Job Training Partnership Act to the Workforce Investment Act, and the concurrent transition from a summer-only job program to the provision of year-round youth workforce development services, presents a challenge for many local Workforce Investment Boards and Youth Councils. Questions abound. What is the role that Youth Councils should play in the transition? How do stakeholders design and deliver comprehensive youth services under WIA? How do they deliver services that go beyond the WIA mandate?

Pima County, a Youth Council Demonstration site and the recipient of a Youth Opportunity Grant, illustrates many of the obstacles and successes engendered by WIA, providing insight into the transition process. Key strategies employed by the Pima County Youth Opportunity Movement and its Youth Council include:[7]

- Broad representation that includes the education community, combined with strong leadership and active, engaged participation on the part of the Youth Council, is critical to success. At the same time, building capacity within existing youth service agencies and linking them together in an integrated youth service network is the most effective way to create a comprehensive, "no wrong door" system that provides youth with easily accessible workforce development services and programs. The Pima County Youth Opportunity Movement, building upon already strong partnerships among youth providers, created new partnerships beyond job training and provided local stakeholders with funds to create these new partnerships.

- Strong and active partnerships among the private sector, the public sector, and the educational community help youth stakeholders maximize existing local resources and create a comprehensive, accessible youth service system that is a major part of WIA programs and the One-Stop system. Youth Council activities are fully integrated with the One-Stop system through the youth service network built upon the above-referenced partnerships. Pima County benefited from its pre-WIA workforce development system. Since 1984, Pima County has managed a consolidated employment and training system for youth (and adults) throughout the City of Tucson and Pima County. With the advent of WIA,

[7] The Youth Opportunity Movement is Pima County's five-year, $28 million plan for youth aged 14-21 living in the designated area. The program works in partnership with many existing local agencies and programs that serve youth.

at the recommendation of the Youth Council, the Workforce Investment Board merged traditional summer and year-round programs into a single service menu for youth eligible for services. Under WIA, youth receive services from a system of service providers. The strategies the Youth Council has used to develop a broad range of coordinated services that integrate youth development include structuring service delivery around the One-Stop in the youth portion of the local WIA plan. The service network, which appears seamless from a young person's perspective, is coordinated and linked by the case management team. To further ensure maximum access to services for all youth, Pima County One-Stop Centers coordinate the case management team.

- Under the Youth Opportunity Movement, the youth service network has been expanded to include most—if not all—organizations serving youth in the Youth Opportunity target area. At the same time, each of the 21 core partners have hired a Youth Services Specialist dedicated to the grant, with each YSS participating in weekly Youth Opportunity/One-Stop meetings and reporting to One-Stop supervisory staff. The development of the YSS team is specified in the Pima County Workforce Development Plan, which calls for contracted service providers to dedicate staff to a youth services team based out of the One-Stop. Potential service providers must certify their willingness to do this in their responses to the council's RFP. The team carries out joint activities, including outreach, assessment, and follow-up, and coordinates service delivery, troubleshooting problems or gaps in services on a case-by-case basis.

  The goal is to give all youth in the system access to the resources and programs offered by each service provider, including local One-Stop resources for youth. "The youth services network of case managers acts like a central nervous system," notes Dorothée Harmon of the Community Services Department. "Assessment drives service planning, which drives case management. Extensive information and referral training and regular staff meetings allow for shared expertise and joint problem solving."

- In addition to service provider's dedicated case managers, the youth services network includes dedicated case management staff hired by the Tucson Unified School District and others that serve the Youth Opportunity target area. This builds capacity in their dropout prevention program and ensures those efforts are linked to resources governed by the Youth Council.

- Youth play an important role in the Youth Council. The council established a Youth Development Council, made up five adults and sixteen youth leaders recruited through schools and partner agencies in the youth services network. The YDC, supported by a $10,000 state grant, is designed to ensure meaningful participation for youth and create a process that—as part of the Youth Council—is youth-driven. Members are

conducting a countywide visioning effort to assess where youth see their greatest needs and their most valuable aids, an effort being made in tandem with a statewide youth leadership initiative. The YDC is also providing specific input on the Youth Opportunity Movement and working to develop its own operating parameters, including representation on the Youth Council.

YDC activities aim directly at engaging youth policy in policy issues in a way that is meaningful to youth, with specific input so far relating to the Youth Opportunity Movement. The YDC still needs to develop representation and participation with WIA youth activities.

- Adequate funding to support the WIA-mandated, year-round programs is crucial, and leveraging state, city ,and county funds, as well as private-sector support, is important for securing the necessary resources. Pima County's most important source of funding is the Youth Opportunity Grant, which provided the funding for the 21 core partners to hire a Youth Services Specialist dedicated to the grant. Dedicated Youth Opportunity staff are also in place at community service centers operated by Pima County, including One-Stop Centers, the Kino Teen Center, Las Artes, and the Jackson Employment Center for the Homeless. At the same time, the Youth Council works with a variety of partners to leverage additional funds beyond WIA. (See Appendix B for a complete list of YO partners and the funds leveraged by their participation).

## Youth Council History

Pima County, Arizona, is about 10,000 square miles of rural, suburban, and urban areas, including several Indian reservations.[8] Among the 850,000 county residents, 500,000 live in Tucson. The demographic profile of Pima County is dominated by whites, Chicanos, and Native Americans, with a small number of African-Americans and an even smaller number of Asian-Americans. Pima County has two Enterprise Zones, one in South Tucson and portions of Tucson and the other in an unincorporated portion of the county southwest of Tucson.

The Pima County Youth Opportunity Movement focuses on part of Tucson and a few scattered rural communities. While the unemployment rate in Tucson is 3.7 percent (and rising), the unemployment rate for the Youth Opportunity area is over 15 percent. At the same time, the area has an overall poverty rate of 40 percent (almost 50 percent for children 17 and under), and a high school drop-out rate of almost 23 percent for youth age 16 to 19, one of the nation's highest.

[8] The San Xavier, Pascua Yaqui, and Tohono O'odham reservations together account for ownership of 42.1 percent of county land.

Pima County's Youth Opportunity vision is to "help all youth in the Youth Opportunity area, particularly out-of-school youth, acquire the necessary academic, technical, workplace, and leadership skills to transition into adulthood, careers, and further education and training." A key goal is to build capacity within existing youth service agencies and link them together in a youth service network.

Primary industries in the area include high-tech/IT, optics, biotech, tourism, and services (including a growing number of call centers). A major employer is Raytheon, producer of defense, government, commercial electronics, and business aviation and special mission aircraft. The events of September 11, 2001, have had a negative effect on the region's tourist industry.

The Pima County Youth Council has its origins in the former local Private Industry Council. In 1998, the PIC began to shift to a more strategic, less micro-management role in implementing youth programs. With WIA, the PIC dissolved and reformed to attract a more inclusive group of youth stakeholders. The Youth Council was formed in December 1999. Pima County has received a $7 million Youth Opportunity Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. Youth Opportunity Grants fund comprehensive services, including education, job training, support services, leadership, and social skills development.

## Site Profile

The Workforce Investment Act and the Youth Opportunity Grant have shifted emphasis toward individualized mentoring and comprehensive youth development services. As the organization linking WIA and the local Workforce Investment Board to the county and city programs and institutions that serve youth, the Youth Council has developed a broad range of strategies to integrate youth employment and youth development for in-school and out-of-school youth. Service delivery in Pima County is structured around the One-Stop system, as outlined in the youth portion of the local WIA plan.

To facilitate the transition from JTPA to WIA, and to develop a comprehensive youth policy, representatives of 25 youth programs provided input and policy direction. This membership formed the core for a larger group of youth stakeholders brought together to work on the youth portion of the local plan for workforce development. The plan identifies objectives in the areas of basic skills, youth development, meaningful participation, occupational relevancy, and mentoring and support for youth age 0 to 22+. The plan framework is being filled in with a county-funded inventory of existing workforce development programs and resources, which will help ensure that the Youth Council fully mobilizes existing resources to implement the plan. Also, under a $10,000 state grant, a youth leaders' subgroup of the council is assessing youth needs from the perspective of their peers countywide.

The Youth Council serves as a focus of leadership and improvement in youth activities and services by providing governance and oversight for the Youth Opportunity Grant, the WIA Youth Program, and a Rewarding Youth Achievement grant that links career experiences with math and science excellence for young people. WIA funds and grants such as the Youth Opportunity funding do not always provide enough resources to support a high-quality youth program, and Youth Councils must leverage additional in-kind resources through linkages with other community development initiatives, groups, facilities, and programs. Pima County has a strong history of leveraging additional local resources for JTPA summer programs. In addition, Pima County runs the Tucson workforce development system, providing access to both city and county funds. The Youth Council takes full advantage of current linkages to leverage WIA and Youth Opportunity funds that target youth.

| **Service Delivery Network—Core Partners** | |
|---|---|
| **AGENCY** | **LEVERAGED RESOURCES** |
| Boys and Girls Club | Locally funded recreation and enrichment programs |
| Chicanos Por La Causa/Calli Ollin Charter High School | State-funded education program, locally funded leadership development programs |
| City of Tucson-Public Housing Management | Federally funded case management and youth development for Youth Opportunity-area families |
| City of Tucson:<br>Northwest Neighborhood Center<br>El Rio Neighborhood Center<br>Old Pueblo Center<br>Quincie Douglass Neighborhood Center | Locally funded recreation programs, including Teen Club and the Survival wilderness and hiking program |
| Fred Acosta Job Corps Center | Federally funded job training programs: 70 youth |
| Our Town Family Center | Federal/state/locally funded gang prevention and intervention programs |
| Pima County Juvenile Court Center | Case management estimated at $500 per youth for 150 offenders |
| Pio Decima (Catholic Community Services) | State and locally funded after-school and child care programs |
| Project YES | State and locally funded education and youth development programs |
| SER Jobs for Progress | Federal and state funded workforce development, education, and ESL programs |
| Tucson Indian Center | Federal- and state-funded workforce development, education, and social services programs |
| Tucson Urban League | Federal, state, and locally funded workforce development, education, housing, and community development programs |
| Tucson Unified School District (Tucson, Pueblo, Rincon, and Catalina High Schools) | Dropout prevention coordinators |
| Tucson Youth Development/ACE Charter High school | |

In addition, the Youth Council helps inform state and local youth funding administered by the county in the Youth Opportunity target area, including two

HOPE VI projects, two Weed and Seed grants, and several County neighborhood improvement bond projects.[9] Specific funding strategies include:

- In the small municipality of South Tucson, located in the Youth Opportunity area, the John Valenzuela Youth Center is jointly operated by the county and South Tucson. Pima County bond dollars recently funded the $160,000 physical expansion of the center to house a computer education lab for Youth Opportunity basic remedial education classes. This has greatly increased the effectiveness of out-of-school youth programs, many of whose enrollees perform well below the ninth grade level on the pre-program tests.

- The Youth Opportunity Movement is acting in concert with two Weed and Seed grants in the Youth Opportunity neighborhoods of South Tucson and Barrio Anita.

- A $420,000 bond project resulted in the construction of the El Pueblo Library near a Youth Opportunity-area neighborhood center.

- The Kino Teen Center, one of two Youth Opportunity hub sites, houses a teen health clinic, as well as workforce development programs. Here, Youth Opportunity participants access primary care and preventative health services, public health education programs, pre-natal care and delivery, and parenting support. Pima County invests approximately $500,000 annually to operate this innovative teen health facility.

The Youth Council coordinates a range of Youth Opportunity services, including: Pledge-A-Job, a private-sector jobs program for training graduates and other youth; Las Artes, an integrated education and vocational arts school for high school dropouts that provides students the opportunity to produce community arts projects while earning a GED or high school credits. The New Media, an integrated education and media arts training for high school dropouts; and Construction Works!, an integrated education and construction training for rural alternative education students.

| **Pima County Youth Centers** | |
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| **LOCATION** | **LEVERAGED RESOURCES** |
| Las Artes Youth Arts Center | Public art by youth (including youth stipends), funded through state and local infrastructure improvement projects |
| Pledge-A-Job | Unsubsidized jobs, primarily in the private sector. |
| One-Stop Center | Federally funded workforce development services |
| Jackson Employment Center for the Homeless | Education, training, and shelter for 70 homeless youth in the YO area |

[9] Weed and Seed grants are awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice to fund community policing and revitalization.

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| Kino Teen Center | YO area One-Stop Center for youth |
| Vocational Charter High School | State-funded high school diploma program for high at-risk youth |

In addition, the council worked with other stakeholders to implement an innovative charter school fully integrated with the Youth Opportunity Movement. Pima Vocational High features work-based learning and intensive case management. Chartered in Fall 2000, it is a high school for high-risk 17- to 22-year-olds. It uses a school-to-work model in an applied academic setting leading to a high school diploma with a sustainable job and a career plan at graduation. The school, a non-profit entity sponsored by the State Board of Education, has three formats to its academic component: a separate eight-week module, alternating weeks, and morning/afternoon sessions, depending on what works in the vocational component.

Of the ten program elements outlined in the youth portion of WIA, the Pima County Youth Opportunity Movement focuses first on improving educational attainment by reducing the high school drop-out rate and increasing college enrollment, followed closely (and often concurrently) by preparation for and success in employment by promoting long term employment on sound career paths.

The role of the Youth Council vis-à-vis the local Workforce Investment Board is one of authority, and the WIB has delegated significant decision-making responsibilities to the council. In addition to certifying youth service providers, the activities of the council include: recruiting and retaining its members, conducting public relations and media outreach, monitoring performance and accountability, and coordinating the RFP process. To create and sustain partnerships in the youth service system, the council evaluates progress, performance, and expenditure reports to ensure that programs meet or exceed expected performance levels. It provides direction for strengthening the youth system and improving services, and it promotes broad ownership of local youth movement and commitment to changing conditions affecting youth.

The 25-member Youth Council has built an effective coalition of members who are actively engaged in the youth service network. Individuals interviewed as part of the site visit attribute this effectiveness to several factors:

- The two vice-chairs of the Youth Council (a private-sector representative and the superintendent of schools) provide strong leadership, vision and commitment during the transition from JTPA to WIA. In addition, the WIB has been willing to grant the council a significant degree of autonomy, authority, and decision-making power.
- Council members underwent extensive training on WIA implementation, ensuring that everyone was "on the same page."

- Membership on the council is expansive and includes public and private-sector stakeholders, as well as education representatives from local high schools, alternative schools, charter schools, and Pima County College.

- Stakeholders note that the funds provided under the Youth Opportunity Grant were critical to expanding the scope of the youth partnership and coordinating partners and resources. In fact, interviewees repeatedly made the point that they could not have achieved such an integrated, One-Stop youth system without the Youth Opportunity Grant, and they express concern regarding funding when the grant is completed.

The decision by the Youth Council to structure youth service delivery around the WIA One-Stop system was influenced by the area's history of youth service. Prior to WIA, Pima County had a limited youth One-Stop, with staff from three agencies participating and consolidated outreach and recruitment and placement activities. That system has expanded to include over 20 agencies, including the city's public housing, parks and recreation centers, high schools, and community college. One-Stop outreach and recruitment staff work closely with all Pima County public school districts and many charter and private schools so that teachers, counselors, and youth know about services and identify applicants for programs.

At the same time, the youth services network includes dedicated case management staff hired by the Tucson Unified School District and others that serve the Youth Opportunity target area. This builds capacity in dropout prevention program and ensures that those efforts are linked to resources governed by the Youth Council. WIA funds a case manager assigned to the youth One-Stop by the local community college. Under Youth Opportunity, this staff is being expanded and a regular work group of college and Youth Council staff meets to develop and review services. This makes college offerings more responsive to needs of youth and increases access by youth to education and training through college.

## WIA Reauthorization

In discussing the transition from JTPA to WIA, Youth Opportunity stakeholders cite a number of improvements engendered by the new legislation. For instance, stakeholders note, JTPA mandated rigorous quotas or guidelines on the demographics of the population served (who received what services). WIA allows much more flexibility in providing services. Likewise, JTPA circumscribed the type and length of assistance that could be provided to in-school and out-of-school youth, limiting service largely to a summer-only job program. With WIA, stakeholders can provide a more extensive array of services year-round. Noted one youth service provider, "The idea of individual service strategies are more meaningful under WIA, and we can provide services such as mentoring, leadership, and life skills, in addition to jobs and work experience."

For Pima County, one challenging aspect of WIA is its eligibility requirements. In contrast to JTPA, youth stakeholders in Pima County now work with youth who have more needs, requiring better coordination and communication among partners. In addition, WIA outlines more detailed requirements for service providers.

However, the transition to WIA has been problematic in some areas. Stakeholders note that the paperwork required under WIA can be overwhelming. Similarly, the transition from JTPA to WIA has meant moving from a fairly workable performance accounting system to a system that is much more complex—"completely snarled" is the way one stakeholder describes it. Many stakeholders perceive that the long-term performance measurement standards are not commensurate with the funding provided under WIA. Stakeholders suggest that the reauthorization of WIA is an opportunity to create a more workable performance accounting system, streamline the paperwork required, and provide additional funds for Youth Councils as they continue to address the challenges of transitioning from JTPA to WIA.

## Contact

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## List of Interviewees

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Kathleen Scanlon, Assistant Director, Tucson Youth Development

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Gloria Estrella, Youth Development Committee

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# Tri-County Youth Council
# Yakima, Washington

## Best Practices and Key Strategies

- Keeping its membership small has made it easier for the Yakima County Youth Council to gain fuller participation, as well as to balance active representation for the smaller counties so that the interests of the larger county do not dominate. With only ten members plus a chair, every member has a significant role to play and absences are noticed. However, the large geographic size of the Tri-County area and the difficult winter travel conditions make it impractical for many people to regularly participate. The council is beginning to use videoconferencing in the winter months.

- Youth Council members were very carefully selected, with an effort to recruit people who wear multiple hats and can both bring their other affiliations to the council and its interests into the other arenas in which they operate. The lead staff person who recruited the council members sees it as "a network of networks." With multiple interests still getting to the table, this approach to selecting members also helps make the council's small size workable.

- The structure of the Youth Council relative to the Workforce Development Council is well thought out and clearly articulated. The WDC appointed the Youth Council chair, who sits on the WDC on a regular basis. This facilitates regular reporting of Youth Council activities to the WDC and coordination of the efforts of both bodies. Because the same staff support both councils, they, too, provide coordination. The Youth Council has written by-laws on expectations of members and the relationship between the two groups. The Youth Council has the autonomy to make decisions, but the WDC must approve decisions concerning funding and structure.

- True collaboration appears to be taking place among youth-serving agencies, educators, public agencies, and the business community (or at least their intermediary representatives). This region does not get much money on any front for innovative programming or addressing the multiple needs of its relatively low-income population. All the players know that they cannot address their needs alone and that they have to work together. Therefore, people seem to "check their egos at the door" and there is a culture of genuine partnership. This culture has evolved over ten years as the economy has changed and the required skill level for workers has increased. The creation of the Youth Council and the Workforce Development Council under WIA has helped this growth of genuine partnerships. The Youth Council, the Workforce Development Council, and staff of the Department of Employment and Training see themselves

as being the interface between the schools and the employer community and seek to help bring them together to cultivate a workforce that can earn a livable wage.

- Both the Youth Council and the Workforce Development Council emphasize building on what is in place rather than creating something that is new and similar. They will look for someone who is already doing what they want to do or part of what they want, and put their money toward expanding it rather than reinventing the wheel. This approach is more economically efficient and helps to build true collaboration.

## Youth Council History

### Local Context

The Youth Council serves three rural, disadvantaged counties in eastern Washington, just east of the Cascade Mountains. Yakima County is the largest county. The two smaller counties—Klickitat and Kittitas—to the north and south of Yakima are smaller, somewhat less poor, and have smaller minority populations. Yakima is the seventh largest city in the state. Other towns and cities in the Tri-County area are small. Most employment is in agriculture and industries related to agricultural production. Unemployment is high due to the seasonal nature of the agricultural economy.

The Tri-County area is very large. It takes over four hours to drive from end to end. Travel can be difficult in the winter because mountain passes need to be crossed to get to some areas (and to Seattle). The area is somewhat cut off from most of the state with the Cascade Mountains on the east, dense forest on the north, and the Columbia River (the Oregon state line) to the south.

Many migrant farm workers from Mexico have settled here, giving the area a large Hispanic population. As of 1998, Yakima County was 43 percent Hispanic. (The two smaller counties have much smaller percentages of Hispanics: 9 percent and percent.) The percentage of minority youth is even higher. The area also includes the Yakama Indian reservation, which provides a significant population of Native Americans in Yakima and Klickitat Counties.

Yakima County has the third highest rate of welfare receipt in the state. Education levels are generally low: 35 percent of those in Yakima County lack a high school diploma. Literacy levels are low, in part a result of a lack of English proficiency among newer immigrants: 52 percent of the Yakima County population read below the sixth-grade level, and 23 percent read below the second-grade level. In the lower Yakima Valley, 90 percent of the high school students' parents do not have a high school diploma, and 80 to 90 percent of the kids are on free or reduced lunch.

The area includes 27 school districts. The "unofficial" dropout rate in some schools is over 50 percent. In some areas, large numbers of young people miss the end of the school year and the beginning of the next one because they leave school to pick produce to help support their families. The attendance pattern makes it difficult for students to receive credits for the work they accomplish.[10]

Yakima County youth, especially those of Hispanic descent, tend to stay in the area after high school (or after dropping out) because their families are here. However, youth in the other two counties tend to move to Seattle or Oregon because of the lack of work opportunities here and because they have weaker family ties to the region. This trend makes it challenging to serve youth, especially those who drop out of school.

**History of the Youth Council**

The Yakima County Department of Employment and Training is the fiscal and administrative entity under WIA and previously under JTPA. Its staff provide support for both the Workforce Development Council and the Youth Council.

The Youth Council is a new body, created in response to the WIA legislation, but it has some roots in a School-to-Work Board that existed under JTPA. Prior to WIA, the department received some federal School-to-Work money, and a School-to-Work Board was created that was like a subcommittee to the Private Industry Council. This board focused on a relatively small area (three school districts) because of the focus of the grant. When the law changed, some of the basic framing of the School-to-Work Board was carried over to the Youth Council, but only one person from the board transitioned to the Youth Council.[11]

The Youth Council is explicitly tied to the Workforce Development Council because WDC members didn't want the Youth Council to get lost in the shuffle. The WDC decided it would appoint the Youth Council chair, and that this chair would also sit on the WDC to ease regular reporting of Youth Council activities. The person they appointed—a banker in Kittitas County—had been vice chair of the WDC.

The Youth Council chair and staff report a good relationship between the Youth Council and the WDC. The WDC has to approve Youth Council decisions concerning funding allocations and changes in structure. While the WDC generally goes along with Youth Council recommendations, it carefully reviews

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[10] Washington has created a Portable Assisted Study Sequence to help migrant farm workers' children make up credits. The PASS resources provide workbooks with tests. Students who complete the workbooks and pass the tests can get credit. The Farm Workers Clinic uses PASS to help students make up credits so that they can graduate with a diploma.

[11] Most of the school district people on the School-to-Work Board wanted to remain focused on more local programmatic issues.

them and asks many questions. This is not a rubber-stamping process. The Youth Council has written by-laws that clearly define roles and responsibilities for members as well as the Youth Council-WDC relationship.

The Youth Council has 10 members in addition to the chair. Its composition goes beyond the requirements of WIA in that it includes business and education (both postsecondary and K-12) representatives. The council members feel it has been important to include this representation from the very beginning. They said their conversations occur within the triangle of public, private, and education and get to a higher level only if public agencies are involved. In fact, the council members see it as acting as an interface between schools and businesses, and working to connect those who are educating tomorrow's workers with the employers who will hire them. The director of the Department of Employment and Training had a similar comment. He sees his department, the WDC, and the Youth Council acting as translators between employer intermediary agencies and the schools. "We work as the glue."

The selection of people recruited to serve on the Youth Council was made carefully, with a strong effort to find people who wear multiple hats and who bring other affiliations to the table. The lead staff person for the Youth Council calls it "a network of networks" because each person brings many connections to the table and, in turn, they bring the interests of the Youth Council into the other arenas in which they operate. For example, the person filling the seat for a community representative works at the community college (where he heads Tech Prep programs), is involved in dislocated worker training (giving him ties to the WDC), and co-chairs the Chamber of Commerce's Transitional Workforce Task Force. A major secondary school connection is the superintendent of the state's Educational Service District #105, which provides state support and technical assistance to a number of school districts in the area. Youth Council members feel that the superintendent's involvement and the earlier school-to-work effort have helped connect education and youth services under WIA.

The Youth Council is relatively small, especially considering the size of the area and the number of communities and school districts it includes. However, it is the geographic area that has been a major factor in deciding to stay small. The council recently decided not to expand because members think that staying small will lead to more consistent participation by everyone. If the group were larger, there would be less pressure to participate and there would be relatively more Yakima County people attending the meetings (the Youth Council meets in Yakima), diluting the representation of the smaller counties.[12]

[12] There seems to be an effort to make sure that the two smaller counties are well represented and appropriately served. In fact, the Workforce Development Council and Youth Council have set aside money for economic development planning in the smaller counties. The head of the Department of Employment and Training noted that even though it costs more for them to do

If the Youth Council were larger, it would also be more difficult to assemble a quorum because of the distance and terrain people have to travel, especially in the winter. The Youth Council held its first meeting via video conferencing in February 2002, and it was fairly successful. Youth Council members expect to do more videoconferencing for meetings next winter.

Youth are not included on the Youth Council, although an ex-participant and parent of a participant are included as per the WIA legislation. There was no indication that young people have input at this level.

## Site Profile

### Structure of Comprehensive Services

*Strong providers and an out-of-school youth emphasis in place prior to WIA helped WIA implementation, but some transition was still required. The structure for service delivery takes into account the area's geography.*

All youth services are contracted out to three main providers (who do some subcontracting) serving specific areas of its three counties.[13] The Tri-County Youth Council is fortunate in that strong youth providers were in place under JTPA, and they have all continued under WIA. These youth providers have staff located in the One-Stop Centers, making it easier for youth who walk into a One-Stop to be directly connected with a youth provider.[14]

Lower Yakima County is served by the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic, a nonprofit that provides a range of services. Its offices are located in the One-Stop Center serving the lower Yakima Valley. The Occupational Industrialization Center (OIC) serves youth in upper Yakima Valley and Kittitas County. It operates an alternative school for one district in this area. In Klickitat County, the Columbia Gorge Employment Security Department (the local branch of the state department) operates the One-Stop Center, provides services for youth, and runs an alternative school.

While all three providers were also major providers under JPTA, WIA still required some transition. The absence of any phased-in implementation meant that people had to start acting differently with little time to change their thinking toward longer-term planning and services. School districts and businesses also had to change their thinking. The WDC and Youth Council staff held community

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things on a county-specific basis, it is important not to discount the smaller Chambers of Commerce and economic development agencies.

[13] RFPs were actually issued by geographic area.

[14] Schools are also a major source of referrals, as well as word-of-mouth.

meetings, put out written information, and held meetings with school superintendents to inform everyone about how WIA was different.

The Youth Council's lead staff person feels that people have taken the long-term emphasis of WIA seriously. They have moved away from a "turn 'em and burn 'em," short-term approach to an emphasis on postsecondary education and long-term goals. For example, the Farm Workers Clinic has historically been primarily an in-school provider and its main focus under WIA is on completing high school and transitioning to postsecondary education or employment. Its long term-focus now includes taking a family-oriented approach to helping parents understand what youth need to do to graduate and that college is an attainable goal—90 percent of the youth they work with have parents who have not completed high school. The summer program includes taking youth to the campus of Washington State University and connecting them with Hispanic undergraduate mentors.

*Out-of-school youth emphasis*: Little work was required to integrate summer and year-round programs and link summer employment to academic and occupational learning: the area already had an emphasis on out-of-school youth. The service delivery area had moved the maximum amount of summer money to year-round programming allowable under JTPA. About half of the youth served under JTPA were out-of-school (including during the summer program). Providers have continued their effective recruitment strategies of going out to find youth in the places they hang out during the day when kids "should" be in school. Provider staff go to where young people hang out—parks, shopping malls, skate parks, YMCA, YWCA, places where TANF checks are cashed, etc.—to appeal directly to young people in addition to getting referrals from schools, teachers, police, detention centers, foster care organizations, and word of mouth from current participants.

Current expectations call for service providers to have 40 percent of the young people they serve be out-of-school youth and 60 percent to be in-school youth. The providers recently asked for clarification that the 40 percent is a minimum, and not a cap, because they do not want to be held to a limit. As noted above, the two smaller counties have problems with young people leaving the area once they dropout, while dropouts in Yakima are more likely to stay around. Given the variation, the Youth Council is considering setting different in/out-of-school percentages for the different counties, with Yakima being about 50-50.

*Implementation of ten program elements*: The Youth Council left it to the providers to tell them how to make changes/additions to offer all ten program elements. Among the ten elements, the Youth Council's priorities are education and work, with the goal of attaining economic sustainability. This emphasis is consistent with the Youth Council's composition, which is heavily weighted towards education and business representation.

According to Youth Council staff and the Development Director for the Farm Workers Clinic, the three primary youth providers offered many of the ten WIA

elements prior to WIA but have had to create more formal offerings for some of them. The Farm Workers Clinic has formally added mentoring, leadership activities, service learning, and follow-up services. Follow-up services have reportedly been the most challenging element to add because these are new to them and they are still determining how best to provide value-added services.

Relatively few youth are directly served under WIA dollars. The providers are contracted to serve only 525 young people in the Tri-County area. Some WIA money for youth went directly to the One-Stops (called Work-Source) to make them more youth-friendly. The intent was to help jump-start youth connections to employers. Youth providers have case managers at the One-Stops who can counsel youth on where to get appropriate services or can refer them directly to their agency if the provider still has openings.

**Partnerships**

*Genuine partnerships have developed as people recognize that they have to work together.*

Across the board, the partners and contractors interviewed talked about a genuine partnership among education, training, and service-provider organizations. As the Chamber of Commerce Vice President put it: "The community has a culture of being a good neighbor. A lead person from one organization will help another out, and later will call upon the person they helped to help out with something they want to do." Organizations frequently work together even when no money exchanges hands, or one organization may fund work that adds to something another organization has started.

*Willingness to build on what others are doing*: In separate conversations, several people talked about the need to be willing to *not* pursue an idea if someone else is doing it. Rather than starting something new and separate, they take the approach of looking at what exists to see if it can be enhanced to serve multiple needs. For example, the Youth Council was preparing for community resource mapping when it discovered that the United Way was developing an Internet-based program to provide information about different local resources. The Youth Council is now talking to the United Way about adding a youth focus to what the United Way is doing. The Youth Council will pay for United Way staff time to add this piece and for WIA youth to assist with entering data and updating it on a yearly basis. The WDC is also planning on merging its federally funded job fair effort with the community college's state-funded job fair, so they can work together to do one, larger-scale job fair for both youth and adults and limit the number of requests to employers.

*WIA has helped foster partnership development:* This culture of "good neighbor" partnerships did not always exist. According to the Chamber of Commerce representative, prior to the creation of the Workforce Development Council there was more of a "good-old-boy club" and people were not very willing to change or

give up territory or power. This slowly changed for a variety of reasons. She mentioned the following: new leadership (the current director taking over the Department of Employment and Training and directing the WDC seems key), some sense that they could do better if they worked more together, and a recognition that there were too few resources to support different but similar efforts.

In the last several years, collaboration has started to take off. The Chamber Vice President noted that once people see partnerships and collaborations start to work, it is contagious. It also gets easier over time as people get more practiced at it. The Director of the Employment and Training Department noted that WIA is a factor here as well. He feels that under JTPA, his organization could have survived without partnerships. This is no longer possible, with broader expectations in the community, and the fact that the legislation presses for collaboration without always providing money to make it happen. Partnerships are now a necessity.

People point to concrete benefits from the partnerships they have developed. The Chamber of Commerce now has a strong partnership with the WDC, whereas they did not have a big connection with the Private Industry Council. The Chamber's school-to-work programs are much farther along than Spokane County's, which started its efforts at the same time and with the same model. The Chamber credits the involvement of the WDC (as well as some financial investment) in their efforts as making the difference for Yakima County. The Best Self program—which provides educational and recreational activities in the summer for economically disadvantaged children—is another example of how partnership and collaboration has helped the Tri-County program develop faster and farther than that of another county's similar program.

The Employment and Training Department Director noted that Tri-County is known for creating partnerships and working together. With limited resources, they know that they have to work together. Economic need as well as some sense that the partnerships offer real gains have increased willingness to check egos at the door and decide what they can contribute. Being a rural community is also a factor in the high level of partnership here. People know one another and there is a lot of pride and support for the community.

**Funding/Leveraging Resources**

It was difficult to get a handle on the extent to which the WDC/Youth Council leverages additional money for youth-related work. Overall, it seems that the Youth Council has not done a lot of this yet, but the youth providers sound very good at merging different pots of money for services that make sense for the community. The Youth Council feels that, as the "new kid on the block," it is in a tricky position to lead the way on creating comprehensive strategies and plans to serve all youth. The members have felt the need to move slowly to let people know what they can do and not alienate those they need to work with. Their

caution has meant, at least at this point, that they done little to pull in non-WIA funds.

However, the WDC/Youth Council looks for where the WIA money can add value to get something going or expand something that is going well. For example, the Youth Council has provided direction for the use of the tail end of federal School-to-Work funds that the Department of Employment and Training received prior to WIA. Much of it was used to support the job shadowing and school-based enterprise work that the Chamber started. Two of its youth contractors already operate alternative schools that get district and state support. WIA dollars are pulled in as appropriate. The Best Self Program relies upon a mix of county, school district, WIA, migrant education, and grant funds for support. WIA pays for 40 youth assistants who work in teams with teachers and college students studying to become teachers. This arrangement makes the program more affordable for the county while offering a worthwhile experience for the WIA youth.

Clearly, there are limits on what the Youth Council can do because of the limited money it receives. However, in talking with council members about obstacles, lack of money was not mentioned. When asked why, they laughed and said that they are used to not having money so they do not ask for it. Most of the state money goes to King County (Seattle), and they expect little in the middle of the state. They say they are used to problem solving with the resources that they have. Since council members play multiple roles in the community, the Youth Council's focus and work go far. When funding opportunities come up, they are considered, but sometimes they are rejected if deemed too narrow or cumbersome to get. For example, the Youth Council decided not to compete for state discretionary WIA money.

### State Enabling Conditions

*State and federally supported school-to-work efforts laid groundwork for WIA to build on.*

State and federal school-to-work efforts have helped advance agendas and provided groundwork for the work of the Youth Council. Youth Council staff feel that school-to-work helped bring the schools to the workforce development table. They said it was like "school-to-work meet JTPA and we will all be together under WIA." With the work that had been done locally using state and federal school-to-work money, doors were open to the Youth Council.

### How the WIA World Is Different than the JTPA World

The different partners expressed the sense that having a Youth Council has been important in creating a greater focus on youth. For so long, "youth business" was mixed with dislocated workers and adult worker concerns. People feel it is important to have some group charged with keeping the needs of youth on the

agenda. The lead WDC staff person also feels that having a Youth Council has helped link the employment and training world with the school districts. He said the relationship with the school districts is totally different under WIA than it had been under JTPA. The school districts now understand how the Department of Employment and Training/WIA can help their work and what skills employers seek in high school graduates. This has evolved with changes in the economy and pressure from the employer community (and, presumably, through school-to-work efforts).

One of the key youth providers identified several ways in which things are different under WIA than under JTPA.

- WIA better allows for long-term planning for youth, so that agencies can work with them longer and aim to connect them to postsecondary education and preparation for sustainable employment.
- Partnerships are broader because of the more comprehensive services required under WIA.
- The One-Stop Centers provide a large array of services that are available not just to the youth but also to their families. She believes that if a young person is to prepare for economic sufficiency, the whole family needs to feel more economically secure, or the youth will continue to be pulled from education to help support the family.
- Under JTPA, there was more of a hand-off from one provider to another in working with an individual, and providers worked in a vacuum by themselves even though several of them may have been simultaneously serving the same client. Now, with all agencies brought together in the One-Stop and WIA's emphasis on collaboration, there is more coordination between providers.
- Having a Youth Council focuses attention on the needs of youth. The Youth Council is identifying the gaps in the larger picture so they can be addressed.

## WIA Reauthorization

The comments included in this section have to do with changes that people would like to see or dissatisfaction with how things are operating. However, it was clear from the interviews that many have found WIA to offer elements and strategies that have improved services to youth. These comments are included in other sections of this report.

WDC/YC staff have have strong objections to the possibility of moving the youth WIA money to the Department of Education. They feel that this would mean "turning their backs" on everything the federal government had said WIA was

about in terms of local control. They are also concerned that if the youth money goes to DOE, the focus on helping youth connect to careers will be lost. Taking the Department of Labor out of the program (for adults as well) seems like turning away from employers.

There is also some dissatisfaction with the performance measures. The Youth Council just received the first-year performance measures, when it is already three years into the program. In many ways, the first-year performance measures were applied to a JTPA population. Consequently, their relevance to what is happening now seems minimal. In Washington State, they also have to deal with a large number of performance measures (33 in all) because the state has its own standards. While the state and federal standards look at similar things, there are subtle differences in how they have to be calculated. Staff feel it is too much reporting.

The WDC/YC staff also feel that the rigid performance measures do not work well with a fluid population. They feel that the good work of their contractors is not always well portrayed by the performance measures. Under JTPA, the summer program was exempt from performance requirements, so providers could bring in youth who needed some help but would not meet the performance standards in the specified period of time. Now it hurts the providers' outcomes to serve these youth. They also have problems with a rotating population of youth who come from families receiving federal migrant assistance and periodically return to Mexico for up to six months to maintain their eligibility. These periodic departures create problems for the WIA providers in terms of the performance standards.

Council staff and several Youth Council members suggested that performance standards be defined in terms of ranges of what the federal government wants to see in specific areas. A specific standard within that range could then be defined based on what a youth needs and the plan for how a service provider is going to help him/her get there. The skill attainment standard for younger youth is an example of this.

Tri-County is also experiencing some difficulty with the budgeting structure (although this may be more of a state issue than a federal one). Interviewees said that they have to obligate all the money for training costs up front, but some of it shows up as unspent initially because it has not all been paid out. The state thinks the money is really unspent. They would like to see some sort of obligated/encumbered column to show that the money has been dedicated and will be spent.

A youth provider voiced the hope that dramatic changes will not be made in the WIA legislation. She feels that any huge changes would hurt the partnerships and programs that they have worked hard to put into place.

Eligibility is more difficult to establish under WIA. Under JTPA, providers could use documentation of eligibility for free lunch as documentation for JTPA eligibility. This was dropped under WIA, but one interviewed youth provider would like to see it come back. She noted that documenting eligibility is especially difficult for the families she serves: they may work at as many as eight farms a season, and it is hard to get all the income paperwork.

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## List of Interviewees

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Lead staff person for the Workforce Development Council

Tamara Bosler
Youth manager, Yakima County Dept of Employment and Training
Lead staff person for the Youth Council

Madelyn Carlson
Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic (WIA youth subcontractor)

Cindy Degroseillier
Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce

Judy Jacobson
Best Self Program

Curtis Kaple
Program coordinator, Yakima County Dept of Employment and Training

Nick Parisi
Youth Council member
Vocational Director/Tech Prep Coordinator, Yakima Valley Community College

Group Interview: Julie Amidon, Tamara Bosler, Patrick Baldoz, Mike Hoon (businessman and member of Youth Council), and Nick Parisi

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